

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66
Board of Education Meeting and Student Fees Public Hearing Minutes
April 21, 2025

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on April 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, Nebraska.

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

Board members absent (excused): Sarah Rider, 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 March 25, 2025, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on April 18 and 21, 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 was 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, Brian Gabrial, Nick Lesiak, Molly Hurley, Robert Aranda, Kim De La Cruz, Kelcy Tapp, Kami Jessop, Laura Mann.

Others in Attendance*: Carolyn Roeder, Sarah Helvey, Diane Cahill. *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.

Ms. Blakely called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She welcomed those in attendance and confirmed with Ms. Hurley 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. She acknowledged that the meeting had been publicly announced and the agenda was available to any interested parties. Board Meeting attendance is noted above. Ms. Blakely requested a motion to approve an excused absence for Ms. Rider. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Mr. Yale seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Student Fees Public Hearing

Ms. Blakely advised those in attendance that the Public Hearing portion of the agenda is to hear opposition, support and observations regarding Student Fees for the 2025 - 2026 School Year, and that any resolution setting, altering or amending the Student Fees Policy (#6340) as a result of the hearing will be in accordance with Nebraska Revised Statutes, Section 79-2,125 through 2,134. Mr. Brain Gabrial, District Officer of Business and Finance, reviewed Policy 6340 and the following proposed changes for the 2025 - 2026 school year, including:

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- Changes to school lunch prices (all levels)
- Lost / damaged property fees for student-issued iPads (all levels)
- Assorted extracurricular activity fees (middle school and high school)

Mr. Gabriel reminded the Board and those in attendance that the Student Fee fund budget is \$250,000, and that expenses are transferred in late August each fiscal year from the General Fund to “use” all revenue generated by the fund. Ms. Blakely invited questions and comments from the board and from those in attendance. Ms. Karnes inquired about the increase in fees for cheerleading and dance at the high school. Mr. Gabriel advised that this particular increase was to allow a broader range for an “up to” amount to cover uniforms and summer camp, and is not a “set” fee. Dr. Lucas reminded the Board that the District and the Foundation assist families every year to ensure that all students are able to fully participate in their chosen activity or club. There were no questions from anyone in attendance.

Revisions to Student Fees for 2025 - 2026 will be presented again for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on May 12, 2025. Copies of the Executive Summary and redline of Policy 6340, Appendix A are included in the board documents folder.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Blakely requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on March 24, 2025. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Mr. Yale seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Ms. Blakely requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on April 9, 2025. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Morrisette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Treasurer’s Report

Dr. Van Gelder presented the treasurer’s report for March 2025 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$13,814,449; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Approval of expenditures was passed by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the March 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 good news about students (Sam V. and his contributions to the JV Golf team; our student musicians in grades 5-12 and their amazing performances in Band-O-Rama on April 7th and WestFest Strings Concert on April 8th; elementary musical productions at Loveland {*Willy Wonka*} and Westbrook {*Frozen*}; and the K-8 Art Fair on April 10th), staff (shout-out to 22 retiring staff members and their combined 483 years of service to WCS); and community (great turnout at our first Golden W Coffee on April 10th for our community members and stakeholders who no longer have students attending our schools).

Academic Report - WHS Modern U.S. History

Ms. Kim De La Cruz, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, introduced Ms. Karolyn Cahill, WHS Social Studies Teacher, who presented an informational report on the most essential unit identified by the WHS Social Studies team: the Atomic Bomb Essay unit.

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The most essential unit covers critical concepts foundational for success in the course, future courses, and/or key academic assessments. This particular unit of study prompts critical thinking and requires students to consider multiple perspectives, while also preparing them for the writing section of the 11th grade ACT state assessment. Students practice the ACT essay section during class with the writing prompt about Harry Truman's decision to use atomic warfare in WWII. They also review the rubric that is used to score their ACT essay. Ms. Cahill shared that a formative assessment is used to allow for modifications to the instruction and learning experience for each student. Copies of the Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Update from the Westside Community Schools Foundation

Mr. Terry Hanna, President of the Westside Community Schools Foundation, presented an overview to the Board on the Foundation and District partnerships that help raise funds to support Westside students, staff and the community. The Foundation has two annual events - VI-VI and the "W Club" Annual Appeal - that help fund their Grant Program, with all proceeds being redistributed back into District programming. A few examples of previous grants include: Adaptive PE Equipment; District Clothing Closet & Food Pantry; Laundry Lessons for Life Skills; Title 1 School Support; Metropolitan Science and Engineering Fair Grant; Westside Middle School Bee Club seed money; and Westside Unified fall day trip. Mr. Hanna also reported that the Foundation's "Impacting Excellence" Campaign has raised \$33.6M of a \$34.2M goal, with donations coming from 160 donors across the country, and is one of the largest capital campaigns for a public high school in the country. This project is on-time and on-budget. The Foundation offers a number of ways that people can direct their donations: specific projects, donor-advised funds; one-time; monthly. All Foundation fundraising efforts directly support students, staff and the District as a whole. <https://wcsfoundation66.org/> A copy of Mr. Hanna's Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

District Enrollment and Demographics Annual Update (for the 2024-2025 School Year)

Mr. Robert Aranda, Director of Student Services, presented an overview of District student demographic and enrollment data for the current 2024-2025 school year. Mr. Aranda noted that there was a slight increase in enrollment over last year, attributable to families moving into the district. And while students who option enroll into Westside account for nearly one-third of our total student enrollment, this number was slightly below last year (33.13% in 2024-2025 vs. 34.39% in 2023-2024). Total enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is 6,178 students K-12. A copy of the Executive Summary and the 2024-2025 District Enrollment and Statistical Data report is included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Approval (#4028 and #4245)

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, requested approval of two new proposed policies, previously presented for board discussion on March 24, 2025:

- Policy 4028 - Substitute Teachers (Personnel)
- Policy 4245 - Employee Social Security Numbers (Personnel)

Ms. Morrisette moved for approval of policy 4028; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by

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unanimous roll call vote. Mr. Yale moved for approval of policy 4245; Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the Executive Summary and policies 4028 and 4245 are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Review (#4281; #4460)

Mr. Lesiak presented revisions to two existing board policies for board consideration and discussion:

- #4281 - Weapon-Free Workplace (Personnel)
- #4460 - Political Activities of Employees (Personnel)

Both policies will be presented again for approval at the May 12, 2025, Board of Education Meeting. A copy of the Executive Summary and redline copies of each policy 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 (10 probationary contracts; two retirements; one resignation) for board approval. Mr. Yale 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.

Written Report: Committee on American Civics

Dr. Mark Weichel, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, advised the board that the Social Studies Curriculum team leaders met with the Board of Education Committee on American Civics prior to tonight's board meeting. This was the second meeting of the 2024-2025 school year. The first meeting was held on October 7, 2024. Public Comment regarding American Civics is being offered at tonight's meeting. A copy of Dr. Weichel's report is included in the board documents folder.

Public Comment regarding American Civics: Ricky Fulton

Public Comment: Grant Reiser; William Cartwright; Addison Herzog; Marly Helvey; June Gentry; Hannah Liakos; Braden Hewlett; Ricky Fulton; Jay Dostal.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings, including: NASB Legislative Oversight Committee; Bond Oversight Committee; WCS Multicultural Fair; Golden W Meeting; WE-SIDE Steering Committee; Battle of the Books; WMS Holocaust Survivor Art Show; K-8 Art Fair; Elementary Robotics Expo; WHS Life Complex Tour; Loveland Phase II Bond Project Community Meeting; Loveland Design Advisory Meeting; Paddock Road Phase II Bond Project Community Meeting; Rockbrook Phase II Bond Project Community Meeting; serving as a Westside Foundation Scholarship Applicant Reviewer; BOE Policy Review Committee; and BOE American Civics Committee. Dr. Lucas advised that the District is keeping a close watch on LB653, which would impact reimbursement for special education programs, support services and option enrollment.

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Finally, the Board expressed thanks to the Student Board Connection (SBC) Spring 2025 cohort for their valuable input on topics and ideas that are important to students; and for their engagement with Board members and eagerness to learn about the role of the Board of Education. Shout-out to Ms. Rider and Dr. Van Gelder for their leadership with the students this past semester.

Ms. Blakely reviewed the following upcoming activities:

April 26, 2025	WHS Spring Craft Fair - Westside High School - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
April 28, 2025	Professional Development Day - No School for Students
May 8, 2025	Loveland Phase II Project Community Meeting - Loveland Elementary - 6:00 p.m.
May 12, 2025	Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, Ms. Blakely adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Dana Beahm, PRESIDENT (SIGNED IN MS. RIDER'S ABSENCE)
Sarah Rider, Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice is hereby given of a Board of Education Meeting for Westside Community Schools, District 66, Douglas County, in the State of Nebraska, to be held April 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, NE. The agenda, continually kept current, is available at the District Office. The meeting is open to the public.

4/18, 4/21 ZNEZ

The Daily Record

Proof of Publication

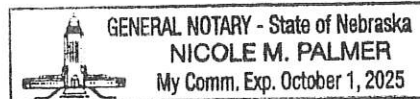
JASON W. HUFF, Publisher

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The State of Nebraska,
District of Nebraska,
County of Douglas,
City of Omaha } ss.

JASON W. HUFF, being duly sworn, deposes and say that they are the PUBLISHER and/or MANAGING EDITOR of THE DAILY RECORD, of Omaha, a legal newspaper, printed and published daily in the English language, having a bona fide paid circulation in Douglas County in excess of 300 copies, and a general circulation in Sarpy, Lancaster, Cass and Dodge Counties, printed in Omaha, in said County of Douglas, Nebraska for more than fifty-two weeks last past; that the printed notice here-to attached was published in THE DAILY RECORD, of Omaha, for 2 consecutive weeks on:

4/18/25 4/21/25

That said Newspaper during that time was regularly published and in general circulation in the County of Douglas, and State of Nebraska.

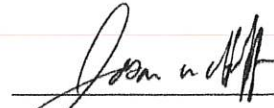


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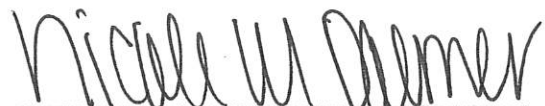
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Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before
me this APRIL 21 2025



Notary Public in and for
Douglas County, State of Nebraska

Omaha Daily Record

THE DAILY RECORD

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Friday, April 18, 2025

Notice Content

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WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NOTICE OF MEETING

A subcommittee of the Westside Community Schools Board of Education (Committee on American Civics) will hold a public meeting on April 21, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, NE. The agenda, continually kept current, is available at the District Office. The meeting is open to the public.

4/18, 4/21 ZNEZ

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4/18, 4/21 ZNEZ

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PROOF OF PUBLICATION

The undersigned hereby certifies that a Notice of Board Meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, was placed on the home page of the website of Westside Community Schools (www.westside66.org) beginning on March 25, 2025 and that it appeared there continuously up through the time of the scheduled board meeting.

Name Kevin Sedivy

Name _____
Title Communications & Graphics

STATE OF NEBRASKA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF DOUGLAS)

Before me, a Notary Public, qualified in and for said County and State, personally came Kim Sedivy, known to me to be the identical person, and signed the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged the execution of this document to his or her voluntary deed.

Christa
Notary Public

