

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ August 18, 2025

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on August 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, Nebraska.

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

Board member absent (excused): Kris Karnes, Vice President
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 August 5, 2025, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on August 15 and 18, 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 Gabriel, Nick Lesiak, Molly Hurley, Kami Jessop, Kim De La Cruz, Kelcy Tapp, Laura Mann, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, Jake Ritonya, Becky Lowther.

Others in Attendance*: Stephanie Adams, 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.

Immediately following adjournment of the FY25 Budget Amendment Public Hearing, Mr. Yale called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He 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. 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 excused absences for Ms. Karnes and Ms. Morrisette. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Blakely 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 August 4, 2025. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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Treasurer's Report

Dr. Van Gelder presented the treasurer's report for July 2025 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$14,108,099; Ms. Rider seconded. Approval of expenditures was passed by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the July 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, showcased new "Class of 2038" stickers that all families of new kindergarten students received; shared photos of a "Kindergarten Signing Day / Class of 2038" event at Westgate Elementary; and recognized a group of high school staff who came together to help an anxious student feel comfortable on the first day of school.

Bond Oversight Committee Semi-Annual Report to the Board

Mr. Matt Herzog, Project Advocates, and Ms. Ann Christiansen, Chair of the Bond Oversight Committee (BOC), presented the BOC semi-annual report to the Board regarding Bond Phase II projects. Ms. Christiansen acknowledged two of her BOC colleagues who were also in attendance: Mr. Sean Conway and Mr. Ryan Decker. She shared the overall timeline of Phase II projects, reporting that all are progressing on-time and on-budget. Work at the middle school (cafeteria expansion) is complete; and projects that will be wrapping up in the next 6 months include Hillside, Westgate and restroom renovations at the high school. A copy of the Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

FY25 Budget Amendment

Mr. Brian Gabrial, District Officer of Business and Finance, requested board approval of the FY25 budget amendment that he presented at the Public Hearing that was held prior to tonight's Board of Education Meeting. Ms. Blakely moved that the Board amend the 2024 - 2025 fiscal budget in the School Nutrition Fund, with an increase to budgeted disbursements and transfers (expenses) by \$600,000; and in the Bond Fund, with an increase to budgeted disbursements and transfers (expenses) by \$37,000,000. These changes to the FY25 budget do not require a change to the District's FY25 tax rates. Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the Executive Summary and amended budget public notice are included in the board documents folder.

FY26 Budget Update

Mr. Gabrial presented an update and preliminary overview of the 2025-2026 budget ahead of the FY26 Budget Public Hearing, which is scheduled for September 8, 2025, at 6:00pm. He reviewed the budget process and timeline, as well as preliminary expenditure estimates of levy funds and preliminary revenue estimates for FY26. Approval of the FY26 budget will be requested at the Board of Education Meeting on September 22, 2025. Copies of Mr. Gabrial's Executive Summary and keynote presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Artificial Intelligence in Westside

Dr. Mark Weichel, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Matt Lee, Interim Director of Technology, provided an update on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and steps that the district has been taking over the past two years to shape the use of AI in our classrooms. It began with a session with university leaders and our secondary department chairs to discuss the right and wrong ways to use AI in schools. Last year, the district hosted community events to help introduce what AI is and how it can be used, and presentations were made to all staff this past spring. A task force of secondary teachers met this summer to help shape ethical use guidelines for AI in our classrooms, and will continue to meet on a regular basis to help with implementation in each building. Dr. Lee reviewed the district's new AI website that is located under the "FOR FAMILIES" heading on the district website: [WESTSIDE AI](#). As with all advancements in technology, Westside Community Schools is committed to understanding each new advancement and recognizing its potential as a helpful resource and / or tool for our staff and students, and ensuring that the use of technology aligns with the District's goals, principles and beliefs. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Approval (#5655)

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, requested to table his approval request of revisions to policy #5655 until the next board meeting. After he presented the policy for discussion on August 4th, Ms. Morrisette recommended that he consult with the Brain Injury Association of NE (BIAN) and parameters around Brain Injury Rehabilitation Support Teams (BIRST). Mr. Lesiak would like to further his discussions with BIAN before submitting final revisions to policy #5655 for approval. He will bring this policy back for approval at the September 8th board meeting. Copies of the Executive Summary and policy 5655 are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Review (#1220; #3150)

Mr. Lesiak presented one new policy and proposed revisions to one existing policy for board consideration and discussion.

#1220 - Public Meetings (Board of Education) - Minor language revisions to this existing policy regarding public notices of board meetings.

#3150 - Law Enforcement Unit (Business) - Proposed new policy in which the board would designate our Director of School Safety and Security as the district's "law enforcement unit". This policy also puts the responsibility of the school's security cameras with the law enforcement unit. Since records of the law enforcement unit (e.g. surveillance video) are not covered by FERPA, the law enforcement unit could disclose such records to other entities (like local police departments) at our discretion. This is important for purposes of our cameras' proposed integration with OPD's real time operations center.

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

Public Comment: There were no requests for public comment.

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Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings, including: 3:1 meetings; Policy Committee meeting; Loveland Design Advisory Committee meeting; Bond Oversight Committee meeting; and the WHS Girls Basketball Trivia Night fundraiser. Mr. Yale reviewed the following upcoming activities:

September 1, 2025	Labor Day - No School / District Offices Closed
September 2, 2025	Professional Learning Day - No School for Students
September 8, 2025	Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.
September 10, 2025	Homecoming Parade and Pep Rally - WHS
September 15, 2025	Bond Oversight Committee Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Beth Morrisette, Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE TO PUBLIC**

Notice is hereby given of a Board of Education Budget Amendment Public Hearing and regular Board Meeting for Westside Community Schools, District 66, Douglas County, in the State of Nebraska, to be held August 18, 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.

8/15, 8/18 ZNEZ



The Daily Record

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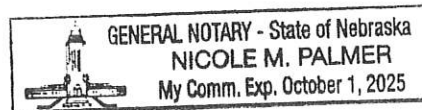
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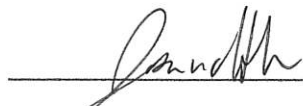



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Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before
me this AUGUST 18 2025


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Friday, August 15, 2025

Notice Content

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