

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting ~ February 21, 2023

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on February 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office - ABC Building - 909 S. 76th Street, Omaha, Nebraska.

Board members present:

Meagan Van Gelder, President
Beth Morrisette, Vice President
Kris Karnes, Secretary
Dana Blakely, Treasurer
Adam Yale, Treasurer-Elect

Board members absent (excused): Doug Krenzer, Director

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 February 7, 2023, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on February 17, 20 and 21, 2023, and on their website. 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, Molly Hurley, Nick Lesiak, Kim De La Cruz, Kami Jessop, Laura Mann, Kelcy Tapp, Russ Olsen, Becky Lowther, Judy Stucky.

Others in Attendance*: Chris Keele, Diane Cahill, Carolyn Roeder. *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.

Dr. Van Gelder 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. Dr. Van Gelder advised those in attendance that the Board would be taking up item VI-H. on the agenda under New Business (*Consideration of Resolution for Facilities Master Plan Phase II*) first, as one board member will need to leave early. She further advised that the board will need to take up agenda item IX. *District Legal Matters* and enter closed session by 6:40 p.m. to accommodate attendance of outside legal counsel. Board member attendance is noted above. Dr. Van Gelder requested a motion for an excused absence for Doug Krenzer. Mr. Yale moved for approval; Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Van Gelder requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on February 6, 2023. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Mr. Yale seconded. Motion carried by roll call vote. Dr. Van Gelder requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Student Advisory Committee Meeting held on February 6, 2023. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Mr. Yale seconded. Motion carried by roll call vote.

Board of Education Meeting

February 21, 2023

Page 2 of 5

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Blakely moved for approval of January 2023 expenditures in the amount of \$8,561,595; Mr. Yale seconded. Approval of expenditures was passed by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the January 2023 financial reports (financial statements, general fund disbursement summary and general fund check register) are included in the board documents folder.

Communications

No communications update or special guests this evening. Ms. Brandi Paul, Director of Communications and Community Engagement, will be presenting her annual communications report as part of New Business agenda items.

Consideration of Resolution for Facilities Master Plan Phase II Special Bond Election

Dr. Lucas presented a recommendation for approval to the Board of Education for a bond resolution to support Phase II of the District's Facilities Master Plan. The bond - totaling \$121 million - would be held via mail-in ballots that would be due May 9, 2023. Ballots will be mailed by the Douglas County Election Commission between April 17 and April 28, 2023, to all registered voters living within Douglas County School District 66. Dr. Lucas thanked members of the Phase II Facilities Task Force, which was convened in early 2022 and met through December 2022. Their recommendation for Phase II projects was presented to the Board of Education on December 12, 2022. They were guided in their decision process by an updated Facility Audit Report that was completed by Project Advocates in early 2022. Board members conveyed their appreciation to the Task Force for their thorough, thoughtful and critical analysis of the data that has culminated in this bond recommendation for Phase II projects. Board members also expressed their confidence in the level of trust, transparency and fiscal responsibility that the District has demonstrated with regard to the use of bond funds for Phase I, which was completed on time and on budget. Supporting Phase II is the right thing to do for Westside students and families to create learning spaces that meet all levels of safety and security, as well as the educational needs of every student.

Ms. Blakely moved to approve, pursuant to the authority granted school boards by Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 10-701, that the Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools issue bonds of the District in the amount of One-Hundred Twenty-One Million Dollars (\$121,000,000) for the purpose of improving safety, security, and technology infrastructure of financing the costs of the following: continued safety and security enhancements; improving technology infrastructure of existing school buildings; and constructing capital improvements, additions, renovations, and replacements of existing school buildings and furnishing and equipping the same, and that a ballot measure to such effect be submitted to the qualified electors of the District at a special Election to be held in accordance with Nebraska Law, as further detailed in the attached resolution, and that the President and Secretary of the Westside Community Schools Board of Education be authorized to sign the attached Resolution. Ms. Karnes seconded. Resolution passed by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the Bond Resolution is included in the board documents folder.

Certified Staff Negotiated Agreement for 2023-2024 School Year

Dr. Andrea Haynes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and District Operations, and Melanie Connolly, Director of Human Resources, presented the 2023-2024 Certified Teacher Negotiated Agreement for board approval.

Board of Education Meeting

February 21, 2023

Page 3 of 5

The negotiation teams representing the District and the Westside Education Association (WEA) began meeting in October 2022. A tentative agreement was reached by mid December 2022, with 87% of the WEA membership voting in favor of the 2023-2024 agreement. Starting salary for first year teachers will increase from \$40,200 to \$41,050. Dr. Haynes reviewed language revisions and Ms. Connelly reviewed changes to the salary schedule, which are highlighted in the attached redline version of the Negotiated Agreement. Ms. Morrisette moved for approval; Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary, Keynote and Negotiated Agreements - both redline and final - are included in the board documents folder.

Public Comment

There were no requests for public comment.

District Legal Matters

At 6:40 p.m., Dr. Van Gelder advised that they would take up agenda item *IX. District Legal Matters* for consideration of information from legal counsel regarding pending district litigation and that discussion of these matters in closed session is necessary and permitted by law. Dr. Van Gelder requested a motion to enter a closed session. Ms. Karnes moved that the Board enter closed session to discuss pending litigation and to receive and discuss legal advice from the District's attorney, both of which are clearly necessary to protect the public's interest and to maintain the attorney-client privilege. Motion was seconded by Ms. Morrisette and carried by unanimous roll-call vote. Dr. Van Gelder advised that the board would enter closed session to discuss pending litigation and to receive and discuss legal advice from the District's attorney, both of which are clearly necessary to protect the public's interest and to maintain the attorney-client privilege. The Board will limit itself to discussion of these issues. The board entered closed session at 6:40 p.m. The board came out of closed session at 6:51 p.m.

Dr. Van Gelder welcomed everyone back into the boardroom and thanked them for their patience with the adjustments of tonight's agenda items. Next up:

District Communications Update

Ms. Paul presented an overview of district communication initiatives from 2022 and a look ahead at goals for 2023. Highlights in 2022 included a celebration of the District's 75th Anniversary; video content additions to the Westside Community Schools YouTube library channel ([WCS YouTube Channel library](#)); and over 100 positive traditional media news stories featuring our amazing students and staff. Ms. Paul shared results of the Communications survey that is sent every year to staff and families. While there was a slight dip in families' overall rating of district communications (2.8%, from 93.6% to 90.8%), 97.1% of families support Westside Community Schools. Ms. Paul shared that finding the right balance of "*enough vs. too much communication*" is ongoing and a continued focus of her department goals every year. The staff rating for overall district communications rose 4.7% from 2021 to 94.7%. Copies of the Executive Summary and Ms. Paul's keynote presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Board of Education Meeting

February 21, 2023

Page 4 of 5

Student Wellness Annual Report (Policy #5660)

Dr. Mark Weichel, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, presented the Annual Progress Report on Student Wellness, as required per Policy #5660 (Student Wellness). Dr. Weichel highlighted activities in each of the six goal areas outlined in Policy #5660. **Health and Nutrition Education:** 8th graders explored the use of MyPlate to guide food and snack choices, and the 9th grade Healthy Living class introduced mindfulness as part of the Mental Health unit; **Physical Activities and Education:** High school students enrolled in Strength & Conditioning utilize the TeamBuildr app to set and track individual goals; **School-Based Activities to Promote Student Wellness:** Elementary PE teachers lead students in FuelUpToPlay60 activities around fitness and healthy eating, and the middle school will introduce a Wellness Club next school year; **Nutrition Services:** While governed by state and federal mandates, Westside's Nutrition Services maintains a higher than required level of food service, incorporating local farm to table food choices, and ensuring creative, fresh and healthy food selections for students and staff; **Counseling, Psychological and Health/Social Services:** Dr. Weichel highlighted the outstanding work of the district's Elementary i66 program. With expanded space and personnel this year, the team has been able to respond quickly to our school buildings when they are faced with a significant behavior incident and work to transition students back to their classroom. Dr. Jessop provided the board with a draft of a Venn diagram showing the specific areas of focus for our School Counselors, School Psychologists and School Social Workers and how those areas overlap; and **Safe School Environment:** Continued partnerships with Safe 2 Help Nebraska and the Douglas County School Threat Advisory Team; ongoing building of trust and open communication between staff and students and families ("*...if you see something, say something...*"); and plans to expand the high school's Hope Squad to the middle school. The Hope Squad is a peer-to-peer suicide intervention group supervised by the Counseling Department and has grown to 70 members in its second year. Copies of the Executive Summary and Policy 5660 are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Approval

Mr. Nick Lesiak, District In-House Legal Counsel, presented revisions to the following two existing policies for approval, previously brought before the board for discussion and consideration on February 6, 2023:

#3120 - Depository for All School Funds (Business)

Mr. Yale moved for approval; Ms. Morrisette seconded. Motion carried by roll call vote.

#3250 - Insurance (Business)

Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Mr. Yale seconded. Motion carried by roll call vote.

Redline copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Review

Mr. Lesiak presented the following proposed new policy for board discussion and consideration:

#3480 - Detection Dogs (Business)

This policy will be presented again for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on March 6, 2023.

Approval of Contractor for WHS Track Resurfacing Project

Mr. Russ Olsen, Director of Facilities, requested approval for the selection of Midwest Track and Tennis to complete the track resurfacing project at Westside High School. Of three companies that submitted bids,

Board of Education Meeting

February 21, 2023

Page 5 of 5

Midwest Track and Tennis submitted the lowest responsible bid. Mr. Yale moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and bid proposal sheet are included in the board documents folder.

Personnel Report

Dr. Haynes presented the personnel report (12 certified staff probationary contracts; one administrator resignation; one certified staff retirement; three certified staff resignations; and one non-approval of certified staff resignation) for board approval. Mr. Yale moved for approval; Ms. Morrisette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the Personnel Report is included in the board documents folder.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates

Ms. Blakely represented the district at a recent NCTE (Nebraska Council on Teacher Education) Board Meeting; the district's Legislative Update that was offered to the community last week (February 13th) was well-attended; Dr. Lucas and representatives from six other Nebraska school districts (Hampton, Nebraska City, Norris, Sutton, Waverly and York) will be hosting a reception tomorrow evening in Lincoln for state Senators.

Announcements

Dr. Van Gelder reviewed the following upcoming events:

February 28, 2023	WCS Community Walk @ Great Plains Black History Museum - 4:00-5:30 pm
March 2, 2023	Phase II Facilities Bond: Building Tour/Informational Meeting - Hillside - 6:30 pm
March 6, 2023	Board of Education Student Advisory Committee Meeting - ABC - 5:00 pm
	Board of Education Meeting - ABC - 6:00 p.m.
March 8, 2023	Superintendent Community Coffee - ABC - 9:30 a.m.
	WE-SIDE Workshop for Parents & Community - WHS Room #220 - 7:00 p.m.
March 9, 2023	Phase II Facilities Bond: Building Tour/Informational Meeting - Westbrook - 6:30pm

There being no further business, Dr. Van Gelder adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.



Kris Karnes, Secretary, Board of Education

THE DAILY RECORD

Public Notice Placement Confirmation

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given of a Board of Education Meeting for the Westside Community School District 66, Douglas County, in the State of Nebraska, to be held **February 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.** at the District 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.

2/17, 2/20, 2/21

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Please notify us of any changes ASAP at legals@omahadailyrecord.com

Scheduled Publication

2/17, 2/20, 2/21

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