

## WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

### Board of Education Summer Workshop ~ June 19, 2025

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The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on June 19, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at Henry Doorly Zoo, 3701 S. 10th St., Omaha, NE, 68107.

**Board members present:**

- Adam Yale, President
- Kris Karnes, Vice President
- Beth Morrissette, Secretary
- Meagan Van Gelder, Treasurer
- Sarah Rider, Treasurer-Elect
- Dana Blakely, 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 May 21, 2025, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on June 17 and 18, 2025, and on their website at [omahadailyrecord.com](http://omahadailyrecord.com), as well as the NE Press Association website at [nepublicnotices.com](http://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, Molly Hurley.

**Others in Attendance\*:** \*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 Workshop to order at 9:00 a.m. 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. Representatives of the Zoo's Education Department and Marketing Department stopped in to welcome the Board.

#### **II. Discussion of Long-Range Planning Wish-Lists and IV. Teaching and Learning**

Discussion of agenda item II. (*Long-Range Planning*) began with ideas of new programming for Westside students, including Dual Language and Immersion programs, as well as the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Considerations for implementing new programming focused on cost / sustainability; student / family interest; and - for Dual Language / Immersion programs - recruiting / hiring bi-lingual teachers and placement of the program. Discussion of new programming segued into agenda item IV. (*Teaching and Learning*) and centered on academic programming currently in place: Excellence in Youth (EY); Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment.

The Board reviewed current guidelines of EY (prepared by the Teaching and Learning team), including: the three tiers of participation; qualification scores for participation in all three tiers and how that information is shared with parents / guardians; programming cycle and content; and EY extracurricular

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activities. To help nurture and cultivate individual student talents and interests, all students are encouraged to engage in any number of activities, challenges and learning opportunities that are posted on the [EY Blog](#), as well as through participation in after-school clubs. From an academic standpoint, the focus of EY is to build student capacity and readiness for Honors courses at the middle school and high school; and AP and Honors courses and Dual Enrollment at the high school. Dr. Lucas will circle back with the Teaching and Learning team to provide additional information to the Board regarding: measuring EY programming; ensuring students are challenged with EY programming; and accountability and reliability of EY programming.

At the high school, in addition to AP coursework and Dual Enrollment opportunities, significant progress is being made in identifying and offering curriculum pathways for workforce development and micro-credentialing. Welding, CNA and Windows are just some of the opportunities available to students that can enhance their plans for the workforce, an Associates Degree, or Bachelors Degree. No matter what a student's plan might be following graduation, Board members concurred on a number of issues : 1) academic achievement and a commitment to excellence should be the cornerstone for all student programming; 2) assess, promote and improve the great things we are already doing; 3) engage students in service learning activities that they have a passion for and that foster a desire for life-long service in their communities; 4) continue to create real-world learning opportunities for students in partnership with our community.

Dr. Lucas reviewed 5-year trend data for the ACT Exam. This extensive analysis (compiled by WHS Administration and the Teaching and Learning team) provides district and high school administrators with detailed information that help guide their strategy on improving composite test scores: ACT test preparation that starts in 9th grade with the online pre-ACT (to include selected 8th graders); providing multiple reportable testing opportunities at no cost to students and their families; implementing ACT test strategies in the classroom and across the curriculum; ensuring that all students and families have access to ACT test resources and support about the importance of the ACT (regardless of their post high school plans); reinforcing (to students and parents / guardians) the importance of regular attendance in school; and implementing motivational strategies and incentives for students.

### **V. Succession Planning**

Dr. Lucas and the Board reviewed the current Superintendent Succession plan (approved by the Board at their meeting on May 20, 2025). No changes are recommended at this time. They also discussed the upcoming board election in 2026. Any interested candidates are encouraged to reach out to Dr. Lucas and any or all board members.

### **VI. District Strategic Plan**

Dr. Lucas shared with the Board that Senior Leadership received lots of positive feedback (from a number of parent and community advisory and engagement groups) regarding the District's 5-year Strategic Plan that was implemented in 2021. People find that it is easy to understand and especially appreciate the "*Strategic Plan Performance Dashboard*" on the district website. Going into Phase II of the Strategic Plan (August 2026 - 2031), district administration is looking to enhance and update the same goals; ensure

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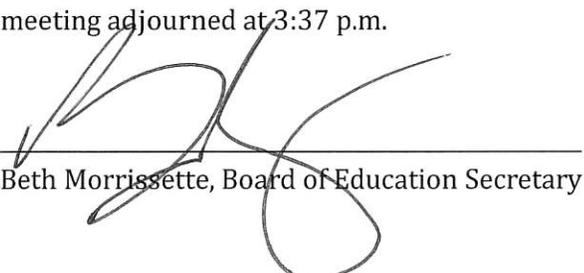
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they are specific and measurable to both current and future opportunities; and add measurables for AI. Board member suggestions: add information on the process and plan for the ACT; add information regarding goals around safety and security; incorporate "Excellence" into Goal 1.

**III. Sense of Accomplishment**

Board members concurred that forecasting and planning for facility maintenance has improved considerably. They also recognized great strides with the WE-SIDE initiative, which was launched in 2020. Dr. Lucas expressed his appreciation for working with a Board of Education that is engaged and committed to Westside students and families; that is aligned and comfortable having difficult conversations; and that leads with clarity and purpose.

Supporting documents are included in the board documents folder. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.



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Beth Morrissette, Board of Education Secretary

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6/17, 6/18 ZNEZ



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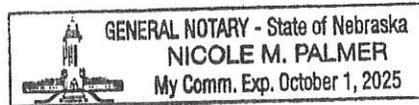
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