

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting ~ August 4, 2025

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on August 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, Nebraska.

Board members present: Adam Yale, President
Kris Karnes, Vice President
Beth Morrisette, Secretary
Sarah Rider, Treasurer-Elect
Dana Blakely, Director

Board member absent (excused): Meagan Van Gelder, Treasurer

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 July 15, 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 4, 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, Nick Lesiak, Molly Hurley, Kami Jessop, Kim De La Cruz, Kelcy Tapp, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, Jennifer Allen.

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 5:00 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 an excused absence for Dr. Van Gelder. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Ms. Rider 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 and Public Hearing held on July 14, 2025. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Yale requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on July 25, 2025. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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Communications

Ms. Elizabeth Power, Director of Communications and Engagement, highlighted student and staff accomplishments: With the first day of school just days away, Ms. Power reviewed start dates for incoming 7th grade; 9th grade and new high school students, as well as open house nights for K-6 students. All students will be back in the classroom by August 8th! The district welcomes 53 new teachers this school year, and all staff received a "WIN THE DAY" t-shirt at the All-Staff Back to School meeting at Baxter Arena on Friday, August 1st.

Phase II Bond Project: Approval of Construction Manager at Risk Delivery Method for Loveland Elementary

Mr. Matt Herzog, Project Advocates, requested approval to use the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) Delivery Method and appoint the committee to review proposals and select the CMR firm for construction of a new Loveland Elementary building. CMR gives the District an advantage to hire a general contractor/construction manager prior to having the construction documents fully completed, while still competitively bidding most of the subcontracted work. The CMR construction delivery method yields the most value on complex phased projects such as Loveland Elementary. Ms. Blakely moved for approval of the construction delivery method of "Construction Management at Risk" under the provisions of the Nebraska Political Subdivisions Construction Alternatives Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 13-2901, et. seq. (the "Act") for the Westside Community Schools – Loveland Elementary school renovation (hereinafter referred to as "the Project"), and hereby direct the Superintendent of Schools, Project Advocates, Owner's Representative for the Projects, and selected school district legal counsel to initiate and carry out all actions necessary to comply with the requirements of the Act, including but not limited to the issuance of a Request for Proposals for the position of Construction Management at Risk for the Project; and, to appoint the following persons to the Selection Committee to evaluate the proposals received from firms in response to the request for Proposals for the position of Construction Manager at Risk in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. § 13-2910 (must have at least five (5) members):

- (a) Member(s) of the school board: Adam Yale
- (b) Member(s) of the school administration or staff: Stephanie Hornung, Principal
- (c) The school's architect or engineer: Cleve Reeves of BVH Architecture
- (d) Any person having special expertise relevant to selection of a construction manager under the Nebraska Political Subdivisions Construction Alternatives Act: Matt Herzog of Project Advocates
- (e) A resident(s) of the School District other than an individual included in (a) through (d) above: Sandy Irish

Ms. Morrissette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and CMR Resolution are included in the board documents folder.

Phase II Bond Project: Approval of Early Release Work Amendment to CMR Contract for WHS Cafeteria and Locker Rooms

Mr. Herzog requested approval of an Early Release Work Amendment to The Weitz Co. CMR Contract for the Cafeteria and Locker Room renovation projects at Westside High School. Early Release Work includes steel fabrication, steel erection, and curtain wall material and installation.

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The proposed Early Release Package value is \$633,399. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Ms. Morrisette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and CMR contract amendment are included in the board documents folder.

Update on District Wellness Initiative

Dr. Lucas introduced Ms. Jen McNally, LIMHP, CCTP-II, who is the Director of Mental Health and Wellness at ESU5. During the 2024-2025 school year, Westside Community Schools partnered with ESU5 and their Mental Health Services Department to support the District's wellness initiative. Ms. McNally and her team spent time each week at Westbrook Elementary and Westside Middle School, working with students, staff and families on wellness strategies and action steps on how to handle stress, conflict, and personal well-being. Ms. McNally provided an overview of their programming and data related to outcomes from 2019 to the present. Ms. McNally and her team will continue spending time each week at Westbrook and WMS this upcoming school year. A copy of the Executive Summary and Ms. McNally's presentation and data is included in the board documents folder.

Annual Review of District Safety and Security Protocols

Mr. Jake Ritonya, Director of Safety and Security, and Mr. Robert Aranda, Director of Student Services, provided an overview of the District's safety and security measures that include continued focus and emphasis on standardized protocols, the implementation of enhanced safety measures and new safety technology. Mr. Ritonya reviewed newly approved district-wide protocols that include: the prohibition of propping doors open; standardized rapid lockdown procedures; and standardized visitor and volunteer management. The district has also implemented new safety technology with ZeroEyes (threat detection system), and Raptor Technologies Emergency Management and Visitor Management. Mr. Ritonya and Mr. Aranda also shared that the District has applied for approximately \$1 million in safety grant funding to procure additional safety technology, including: a district digital radio upgrade; Omaha Police Department's Real-Time Operations Center (ROC) integration; police radios for elementary schools; and additional threat detection technology. Copies of the Executive Summary, Slide Presentation, and Safety Protocols are included in the board documents folder.

Approval of New Science Standards

Ms. Kim De La Cruz, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Kelcy Tapp, Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning, requested board approval to adopt the Science Academic Content Standards as recommended by the Nebraska Department of Education. ([Link to Nebraska's Science page: Science Education](#)). Ms. De La Cruz and Dr. Tapp explained that the revisions are primarily instructional in nature, with the majority of the changes in the high school life sciences strand. The instructional shifts in the 2024 standards are an extension of the shifts that took place with the 2017 science standards. Over the past year, science curriculum leaders and curriculum toolbox members have been working together to explore the new standards. These new standards are now included as part of our written curriculum. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

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Board Policies for Approval (#5305; #5350; #5700)

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, requested approval of the following policies that were presented for board consideration and discussion on July 14, 2025:

5305 - Electronic Communication Devices (Students) - proposed new policy

LB 140 requires schools to have policies prohibiting the use of cell phones and other electronic devices while at school or attending a "school instructional function." This policy was provided to us by the Perry Law Firm (through ESU 3), and developed with input from stakeholders (as required by LB140). It provides that access to and use of personal electronic communication devices during school hours on days school is in session is prohibited on school property or while students are attending an instructional function unless one of the listed exceptions applies. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

5350 - Student Dress (Students) - revisions to existing policy

Section 79-2,158 requires each school district to adopt a written dress code and grooming policy to be implemented at the start of the 2025-26 school year that is consistent with the model policy developed by the State Department of Education. We've revised our policy to be consistent with the Department's model policy. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

5700 - Parental Involvement and Participation (Students) - revisions to existing policy

Due to changes made to policy 6320 (approved on July 14, 2025), policy 5700 needed to be revised to fix cross references and to move the language about parental visits to schools into policy 6320. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Ms. Morrissette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Review (#5655)

Mr. Lesiak presented proposed revisions to existing policy #5655 - Concussion Awareness - for board consideration and discussion. These revisions will be presented again for approval at the August 18, 2025, Board of Education Meeting. A copy of the Executive Summary and redline copy of policy 5655 are included in the board documents folder.

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

Dr. Haynes presented the personnel report (one probationary contract; one certified staff resignation; non-approval of two certified staff resignations) for board approval. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the personnel report is included in the board documents folder.

Approval of Superintendent Goals for the 2025-2026 School Year

Dr. Lucas presented the Superintendent goals and priorities for the 2025-2025 school year for board approval. A collaborative effort between the Superintendent and the Board of Education, the goals and

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priorities align with the Superintendent Performance Assessment that is completed in the spring of each year. Ms. Morrissette moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and the Goals and Priorities are 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, including the Parent Forum at the All Admin Jim Tangdall Leadership Retreat on July 21st; the new teacher breakfast on July 24th; and the All Staff Back to School Meeting at Baxter Arena on August 1st. Mr. Yale reviewed the following upcoming activities:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| August 7, 2025 | First Day of School |
| August 11, 2025 | Bond Oversight Committee - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m. |
| August 18, 2025 | Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m. |
| 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 |

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

 For BETH MORRISSETTE

Beth Morrissette, Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE TO PUBLIC**

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 **August 4, 2025**, at **5:00 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.

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Proof of Publication

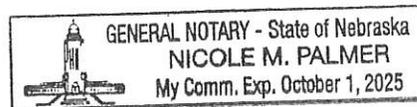
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The State of Nebraska, }
District of Nebraska, } ss.
County of Douglas, }
City of Omaha }

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 1 consecutive weeks on:

8/4/25

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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Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me this AUGUST 04 2025

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