

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ October 6, 2025

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

Board members present: Adam Yale, President
Kris Karnes, Vice President
Meagan Van Gelder, Treasurer
Sarah Rider, Treasurer-Elect
Beth Morrissette, Secretary

Board members absent (excused): 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 September 23, 2025, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on October 3 and 6, 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, Brian Gabriel, Nick Lesiak, Molly Hurley, Kim De La Cruz, Kelcy Tapp, Laura Mann, Kami Jessop, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee.

Others in Attendance*: 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.

Mr. Yale called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 6:00 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 Ms. Blakely. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Morrissette 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 FY26 Property Tax Public Hearing held on September 22, 2025. Dr. Van Gelder 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, shared student, staff and community highlights, including: the grand re-opening of the Cafe Express at WHS on October 6th, with students from Red Shield helping to promote rules and expectations; roll-out of Ms. Powers' WHS Think Tank for students to provide input on district and school initiatives; student reporters providing construction update videos; a celebration for Dr. Brian Stevens, Principal at Westbrook Elementary, who was recently named a 2025 Lozier Foundation LIGHTS Outstanding Principal Award recipient; and an update on the communication plan for the Hillside and Westgate communities announcing their upcoming moves into their brand new buildings.

Annual AP - Dual Enrollment Update

Ms. Kim De La Cruz, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, provided an annual update to the Board on enrollment numbers for both Advanced Placement (AP) courses and Dual Credit. Over the previous year (2023-2024), there was an increase in the 2024-2025 school year for: AP course enrollments (1,197, up from 985); exams taken (873, up from 678); and percentage of test scores at 3 or higher (77%, up from 66%). Dual credit offerings at the high school (for UNO) increased from 14 to 18 courses, with 681 enrollments (up from 481). There has also been a steady increase in dual credit options with Nebraska Wesleyan University. Ms. De La Cruz said their focus over the past few years has been on expanding dual credit offerings with Metropolitan Community College that provide opportunities for students to earn college credit while in high school. In addition, Ms. De La Cruz shared that they are also working to increase credentialing opportunities through MCC's Credential College for students interested in H3 occupations: High Demand, High Wage and High Skill. A copy of Ms. De La Cruz's presentation and Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Approval of FY26 Property Tax Request

Mr. Brian Gabriel, District Officer of Business and Finance, presented the FY26 Property Tax Levies for board approval, previously introduced at a public hearing on September 22, 2025. Mr. Gabriel reviewed the proposed amounts and invited any additional questions from the Board:

General Fund:	\$41,401,789
Levy:	\$0.792775
Bond Fund:	\$11,437,030
Levy:	\$0.219000
Special Building Fund:	\$3,266,529
Levy:	\$0.062549
All Levy Funds Total:	\$56,105,348
Combined Local Levy:	\$1.074324

Ms. Morrisette read the property tax request resolution and moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. The Property Tax Resolution was approved by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary, Property Tax Resolution and Daily Record Notice of the Property Tax Public Hearing held on September 22, 2025, are included in the board documents folder.

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Caucus 2026

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, presented the following items for board approval that are required to move forward with the 2026 Board of Education Caucus: **(1)** Certification of Board Vacancies in 2026; **(2)** Authorization to Proceed with the 2026 Caucus; and **(3)** Approval of 2026 Caucus Rules and Regulations. Mr. Lesiak presented one recommended revision to the Rules and Regulations, with the addition of item #17 that allows for Caucus Committee members to endorse a candidate only AFTER the conclusion of the Caucus.

(1) Certification of Board Vacancies for 2026

Ms. Karnes moved that the Board of Education, pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 32-404(2), certify to the Douglas County Election Commissioner that an election be held in conjunction with the 2026 statewide primary on the date set by the NE Secretary of State to elect two persons to fill two six-year positions on the Board of Education, currently held through May 31, 2026, by Dana Blakely and Beth Morrissette, that voters shall vote for no more than two (2) candidates on the primary election ballot, and that the two candidates who receive the most votes at the primary election be deemed elected to the two six-year terms on the Board of Education with a beginning date of June 1, 2026. Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

(2) Authorization to Proceed with the 2026 Board of Education Caucus

Ms. Karnes moved that the Westside Community Schools, School District No. 66 of Douglas County, Nebraska, proceed with a Caucus on February 3, 2026, with a backup date of February 10, 2026, for the purpose of nominating persons for two six-year terms on the Board of Education as set forth in the approved Caucus rules. Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

(3) Approval of 2026 Board of Education Caucus Rules and Regulations

Ms. Karnes moved that the Board of Education, pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 79-549, approve and adopt the 2026 Caucus Rules and Regulations for the February 2026 Caucus, as developed and recommended by the Caucus Committee; and with the addition of item #17, as recommended by the Administration; and now submit the 2026 Caucus Rules and Regulations to the Douglas County Election Commissioner for approval. Ms. Morrissette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Copies of the Executive Summary, Motions and 2026 Caucus Rules and Regulations are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Approval

Mr. Lesiak requested approval of the following two policies that were previously presented for Board discussion and consideration on September 22, 2025:

#5250 - Rights of Custodial and Non-Custodial Parents (Students) - Proposed new policy. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

#5310 - Bullying and Dating Violence (Students) - Language revisions to existing policy, that are in line with Nebraska statute definitions. Ms. Morrissette moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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

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Board Policies for Review

Mr. Lesiak presented revisions to three existing policies for board consideration and discussion. Revisions represent minor updates to defined terms and the addition of clarifying language.

#6130 - Certified Staff (Instruction)

#6140 - Curriculum Program (Instruction)

#6600 - School Calendar (Instruction)

Policies will be presented for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on October 20, 2025. Copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Public Comment: There was one request for public comment: Diane Cahill, regarding meeting minutes submitted; materials from public comment and what happens to those items.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings over the last two weeks, including: Loveland Design Advisory Committee meeting; Loveland Community meeting; WE-SIDE subcommittee meeting; Board Policy Subcommittee meeting; WE-SIDE Multicultural Fair subcommittee meeting; NE Council for Teacher Education (NCTE); WHS athletic events; the Westside Foundation's Annual VI VI event; the "Step Up for Down Syndrome" Walk (where Westside Unified was well represented!); visit and tour at Paddock Road; and WHS Theater production of Romeo and Juliet. Dr. Lucas advised that RSVP's are coming in from Senators who plan to attend the Special Services Showcase on December 3rd.

October 8, 2025	Parent Teacher Conferences - 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
October 9, 2025	Parent Teacher Conferences - 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (No School for Students)
October 10, 2025	No School
October 13, 2025	Professional Learning Day (No School for Students)
October 14, 2025	Bond Oversight Committee Meeting - Westside Middle School - 6:00 p.m.
October 16, 2025	Community Meeting re: WHS Cafeteria / Locker Room Renovation Project - WHS Little Theater - 6:00 p.m.
October 20, 2025	Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.


Beth Morrissette, Secretary, Board of Education

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NOTICE OF MEETING**

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10/3, 10/6 ZNEZ



Proof of Publication

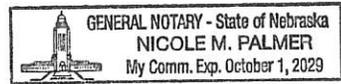
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
The State of Nebraska,
District of Nebraska,
County of Douglas,
City of Omaha } ss.

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:

10/3/25 10/6/25

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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Notice Content

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10/3, 10/6 ZNEZ

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