

## WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

### Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ December 8, 2025

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The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on December 8, 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
- 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 November 18, 2025, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on December 5 and 8, 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 were 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, Kim De La Cruz, Kami Jessop, Kelcy Tapp, Laura Mann, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, Jake Ritonya.

**Others in Attendance\*:** Stephanie Adams, Mei McIntosh, Jeremiah Drulin, Veda Robinson. \*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 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. 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 November 17, 2025. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Mr. Yale requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Workshop held on December 1, 2025. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Dr. Van Gelder presented the treasurer's report for November 2025 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$22,287,250; Ms. Morrissette seconded. Approval of expenditures was passed by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the November 2025 financial reports (financial statements, general fund disbursement summary and general fund check register) are included in the board documents folder.

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### **Communications**

Ms. Elizabeth Power, Director of Communications and Engagement, shared student, staff and community highlights, including: kindergarten students displaying things they are thankful for (craft projects and pajama day!); 13 WHS students attended the Journalism Education Association Annual Conference in Nashville, TN; 7th grade, 8th grade and WMS Unified Choir performance; 8th Grade Select Choir performance at the NE Music Education Association Annual Conference in November; celebration of our Building Services night crew team members with a special Thanksgiving Dinner and t-shirts printed with "WIN THE NIGHT!" (a nod to our district theme this year of "WIN THE DAY!"); a shout-out to the Nutrition Services team for all their extra efforts prepping meal boxes for district families in need; WHS Dance Marathon student leaders were given a sneak-peek tour of the new Children's Nebraska Behavioral Health and Wellness Center; and our Community Council volunteers who oversee and organize the Westside Clothing Closet are asking the community for help in stocking up on winter coats, hats, mittens, boots, hoodies, joggers, socks and underwear. Their "needs" list (QR code) can be found on the district website.

### **Bond Phase II Project - Approval of General Contractor for WHS Fluid Cooler Project**

Mr. Matt Herzog, Project Advocates, requested approval of the bid from 7er Construction in the amount of \$1,755,000 for the construction work of the WHS Fluid Cooler project. This was the lowest responsible bid of the four bids received and includes the cost of precast concrete material (\$240,963) previously approved by the board on November 3, 2025. Work is scheduled to begin in February 2026, with completion by July 31, 2026. Ms. Morrisette moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and contract are included in the board documents folder.

### **WHS Student Leadership**

Dr. Jay Dostal, Principal, WHS; Ms. Teunnia Archie, WHS Counselor; and Ms. Tiffany Atemnking, WHS English Teacher; and students Victor C., Mei M., and Kennadi M., presented on student leadership at Westside High School. Dr. Dostal provided an overview of the WHS Student Council (StuCo), the student government organization that organizes a number of social activities for the student body and shares student concerns with the high school leadership team. Each grade level has a student representative, with another 75-80 students involved as members of the Student Council. Ms. Archie, Ms. Atemnking, Victor, Mei and Kennadi shared about the Black Student Leadership Council (BSLC), which is in its third year at WHS and has grown from 3 students to 34! BSLC and StuCo work closely together on a number of student events and activities that tie in with the district's WE-SIDE initiative, with a number of students serving on both councils. BSLC provides high school students of Black / African descent with opportunities to develop leadership experience through internships, as well as participation with other local high school BSLC chapters. Copies of the Executive Summary and slide presentations are included in the board documents folder.

### **Anti-Bullying Annual Year in Review**

Mr. Robert Aranda, Director of Student Services, presented the annual review of the district's anti-bullying efforts, as outlined in policy 5310 (Bullying and Dating Violence). Addressing bullying is a collaborative and on-going effort that begins in kindergarten and continues through high school, and involves Teaching and Learning, Special Services, Student Services and Professional Learning.

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Mr. Aranda noted that one of the most important components in addressing bullying is understanding the difference between peer conflict and bullying. Teachers and building counselors cover this routinely in classroom lessons, small group activities and whole-school assemblies. Other district programs with anti-bullying elements include: "No Place For Hate", "Circle of Friends", behavioral health modules, WE-SIDE and Unified Sports. And the District's K-12 MTSS program (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) further enhances anti-bullying efforts, stressing the importance of safe, respectful, and responsible behavior. By providing ongoing and intentional lessons throughout the school year that focus on acceptance, tolerance and conflict resolution, and by establishing trusted relationships, our teachers and counselors are truly the first line of defense in keeping peer conflicts from escalating to the level of harassment and bullying. Copies of the Executive Summary and Mr. Aranda's slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

### **NDE: AQuESTT and NSCAS**

Dr. Mark Weichel, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Ms. Kim De La Cruz, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning; and Dr. Kelcy Tapp, Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning, presented an overview of 2024-2025 NSCAS (NE Student-Centered Assessment System) spring testing results and AQuESTT (Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow), which is the NE Department of Education's accountability system. The AQuESTT classification scores (Excellent; Great; Good; Needs Support to Improve) are tied to a number of data points that include: a district's NSCAS ELA and math scores; EL proficiency; science; chronic absenteeism rates; and graduation rates. This year, the District received an overall rating of Excellent, along with 6 of our schools; 4 schools received a rating of Great; and 2 schools received a rating of Good. Dr. Weichel, Ms. De La Cruz and Dr. Tapp reviewed overall district NSCAS score data, and broke it out further by both the length of time a student has been enrolled in WCS (1 year, 2 years and more than 3 years), as well as by number of days absent (under 5 days; between 5 and 10 days; between 11 and 17 days; and more than 18 days). Board members expressed their appreciation for these additional layers of data analysis that show a correlation of length of time in district and regular attendance at school with higher scores. Copies of the Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

### **Approval of Bid for WHS Theater Lighting Upgrade Project**

Mr. Andy Wane, Director of Facilities, requested approval of the bid from Downs Electric in the amount of \$551,900 for the Theater House Lighting upgrade at Westside High School. Downs Electric was the only qualified bidder to submit a bid on this project. The majority of the work will be completed in the summer of 2026. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and bid tab sheet are included in the board documents folder.

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

Dr. Andrea Haynes, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and District Operations, presented the personnel report (one administrator contract; one administrator resignation; three certified staff retirements; four certified staff resignations) for board approval. Dr. Van Gelder 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.

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**Follow-Up Report: BOE Summer Workshop Action Steps**

Dr. Lucas provided the Board with an update of ongoing action steps since their discussion at the BOE summer workshop in June 2025 affirming the district's commitment to excellence that include: additional career credentialing opportunities at the high school; enhancements to the district's "Excellence in Youth" programming; and plans for the College and Career Center at the high school. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

**Written Report: Annual Update on Multicultural Education (Policy 6135)**

Dr. Weichel submitted the annual status report and overview on the District's multicultural education programming per regulations and procedures outlined in Nebraska Statute 79-719 and District policy 6135. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

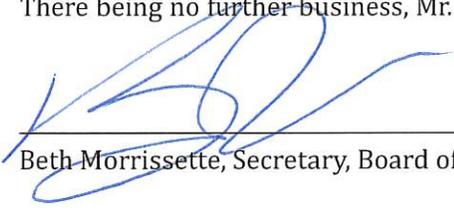
**Public Comment:** There were no requests for public comment.

**Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements**

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings over the last two weeks, including: the NE State Education Conference; Westside Special Education Programming Showcase for state senators; WHS swim meets; WHS JV Girls basketball; WHS Winter Pep Rally; WMS Choral Concert; WHS Student Think Tank, hosted by Ms. Powers; Board Orientation Workshop; and WE-SIDE Steering Committee meeting.

December 15, 2025	Bond Oversight Committee Meeting - 6:00 p.m. - ABC Building
Dec. 22, 2025 thru Jan. 5, 2026	Winter Break - No School
Dec. 24, 25 / Dec. 31, Jan. 1	District Offices Closed
January 6, 2026	First Day of Second Semester
January 12, 2026	Board of Education Meeting - 6:00 p.m. - ABC Building

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.



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Beth Morrisette, Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS  
NOTICE OF MEETING**

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12/5, 12/8 ZNEZ



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**JASON W. HUFF, Publisher**

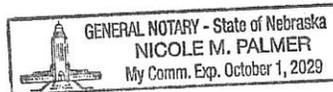
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City of Omaha } ss.

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12/5/25                      12/8/25

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*Nicole M. Palmer*

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12/5, 12/8 ZNEZ

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