

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ March 9, 2026

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on March 9, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, Nebraska.

Board members present: Adam Yale, President
Meagan Van Gelder, Treasurer
Sarah Rider, Treasurer-Elect
Beth Morrissette, Secretary
Dana Blakely, Director

Board member absent (excused): Kris Karnes, Vice President

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 24, 2026, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on March 6 and 9, 2026, 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 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, Molly Hurley, Kim De La Cruz, Kami Jessop, Kelcy Tapp, Laura Mann, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, Jake Ritonya.

Others in Attendance*: Sean Conway; Jane Kugler. *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. Mr. Yale requested an excused absence for Ms. Karnes. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Blakely 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 held on February 23, 2026. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Communications

In Ms. Power's absence, Dr. Lucas shared a brief Communications update to recognize WHS student Ryan Kelly, who was named runner-up as the NE State Journalist of the Year! Ryan spent countless hours completing his journalism portfolio and will receive a \$750 scholarship and recognition at the NE State

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Journalism Conference. Outstanding work, Ryan! The staff at Hillside Elementary recently held a “Pink Out” to celebrate five of their team members who are all expecting a baby girl this year! The District has run some targeted advertising for enrollment opportunities to families within a six mile radius of the district office.

Update on Professional Learning

Ms. Laura Mann, Director of Learning and Development, provided an overview on professional learning programming in Westside and introduced the recently developed “*Professional Learning Pillars*” that support the principles of the WCS Instructional Model and help guide the continued professional development and growth of all district staff. All professional learning opportunities (required and choice) reinforce the district’s commitment to educator excellence. The three Professional Learning Pillars are:

Educator Orientation & Induction - “Westside Way” is the district’s three-year onboarding and development program designed for all educators joining Westside, aimed at fostering collaboration, reflection, and professional growth.

Continuous Learning & Development - A wide offering of learning opportunities are available for teachers and staff to enhance their skills, drive student success, collaborate with peers, and implement innovative practices in their classrooms, and are offered during pre-opening week, PLC time, Wednesday early dismissal, before and after school, and on scheduled PL days.

Self-directed Growth & Engagement - Certified staff are provided the opportunity to select from a variety of offerings to earn PL ‘credits’. This incentivized and optional approach to professional growth is designed to ensure that learning is meaningful, relevant, and directly applicable to staff priorities and daily practice.

A copy of Ms. Mann’s slide presentation and Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Approval - #7115; #7140; #7180

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, was absent for this evening’s board meeting. In his absence, Dr. Andrea Haynes, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and District Operations, presented three policies for approval that Mr. Lesiak previously presented on February 23, 2026, for board discussion and consideration.

#7115 - Denial of Access to School Premises or Activities - This proposed new policy is from KSB’s policy book. The District already issues “ban-and-bar” notices as we are allowed to do by law. This policy would: 1) provide notice to the public that we can and will ban people from our property under appropriate circumstances; and 2) provide a policy basis for us to do so. Ms. Rider asked for discussion for revision of some terms and language, specifically regarding item #3. Mr. Yale recommended tabling any action on this policy until Mr. Lesiak returns and is able to convene the Board Policy Committee. Ms. Blakely moved to table board action on policy 7115; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

#7140 - Request to Contact Students - Propose elimination of this policy; subject matter is covered in policy #5315 (Access to Students by Law Enforcement and other Agencies). Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Morrisette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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#7180 - Visits to the Schools - Propose elimination of this policy; subject matter is covered in policy #6320 (Review of / Access to Educational Materials) and the Student / Parent Handbook. Ms. Morrissette moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Copies of each policy and the Executive Summary 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 (five certified staff probationary contracts; five certified staff resignations; and one administrator contract) for board approval. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the personnel report is included in the board documents folder.

Public Comment: There were three requests for Public Comment. Paul Vonderfecht - Ed. Tech; Jane Kugler MD - Technology in Education; Justin Dorsey.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

Dr. Lucas and board members expressed their condolences to the family of former board member David Woodke and acknowledged his 18 years of service on the Westside Board of Education. Mr. Woodke passed away on Friday, March 6th. Board members were represented at a number of activities and meetings over the last two weeks, including: lobbying at the State Legislature in Lincoln; State Swim; Westbrook walk-through; Multicultural Fair subcommittee meeting; BOE Student Board Connection Cohort session; Oakdale 5th and 6th grade music program; NASB Legislative Committee meeting.

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|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 16, 2026 | Bond Oversight Committee Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m. |
| March 18, 2026 | Parent Teacher Conferences - 4:00-8:00 p.m. |
| March 19, 2026 | Parent Teacher Conferences - 8:00am-4:00pm - No School for Students |
| March 20, 2026 | No School - Quarter Break |
| March 23, 2026 | Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m. |
| March 28, 2026 | Loveland Elementary "One Last Look" Open-House - 1:00-3:00 p.m. |
| March 30-April 3 | Staff Appreciation Week! Early dismissal schedule on 4/3/26 |
| April 6-10, 2026 | Spring Break - No School |

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.



Beth Morrissette, Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF MEETING**

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Proof of Publication

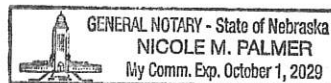
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JASON W. HUFF, being duly sworn, deposes and say that they are the PUBLISHER and/or MANAGING EDITOR of THE DAILY RECORD, of Omaha, a legal newspaper, printed and published daily in the English language, having a bona fide paid circulation in Douglas 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:

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WCS Board of Education Meeting - March 9, 2026



Feb 24 2026 8:00 AM

The Westside Community Schools Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the District Administration Office - ABC Building - 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, NE. [Click here for a link to the agenda and meeting documents.](#)(/fs/pages/2727)

All
