

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ March 23, 2026

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on March 23, 2026, 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 March 10, 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 20 and 23, 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, Becky Lowther.

Others in Attendance*: Stephanie Adams, Andrew Freeborn. *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 March 9, 2026. Ms. Blakely 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 February 2026 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$11,962,344; Ms. Rider seconded. February 2026 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: The Sunset Hills Robotics Team placed 4th out of 98 teams at the NE First Lego League Championship held recently in Lincoln. Way to go!! Next week (week of March 30th), the District will be celebrating all staff during Staff Appreciation Week. Three WHS students represented the District when they were invited to perform as a jazz trio at the ribbon-cutting of the new Tenaska Center for Arts Engagement.

District Communications Annual Update and Strategic Plan Goal 3: Community, Collaboration, Partnerships

Ms. Power presented the annual Communications update and provided an overview of how the work of the Communications Department aligns with objectives in Strategic Plan Goal 3: Community, Collaboration and Partnerships. Ms. Power highlighted a number of tools that the district uses to streamline and communicate with all stakeholders including: Smore newsletters (includes translation feature); SchoolStatus (includes option to select a native language); AlwaysOn Chat Bot; and FinalSite Mass Communication. She also provided examples of how the district is sharing our good news about students and staff and Phase II Bond work, both through our media partners and also through district-produced videos. Ms. Power reviewed Strategic Plan objectives related to Partnerships and the focus that has been given to engaging our retired community members and empty-nesters, and building partnerships with area businesses. Overall community support for the district is 98%. A copy of Ms. Power's slide presentation and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Approval - #7115

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, presented one new policy for approval that was initially presented for board discussion and consideration on February 23, 2026.

#7115 - Denial of Access to School Premises or Activities (*Community Relations*) - This proposed new policy is from KSB's policy book. The District already issues "ban-and-bar" notices as are allowed by law. This policy will: 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. Mr. Lesiak reviewed one revision to clarifying language for item #3 that was made during discussion of this policy at the board meeting on March 9, 2026. This revision was reviewed by the BOE Policy Committee. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the policy and Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Review - #5317

Mr. Lesiak presented one new policy for board consideration and discussion:

#5317 - Enrollment of Expelled Students (*Students*) - This proposed new policy outlines that a majority vote of the Board (as required by state statute) would be required to enroll any student during the term of any known expulsion of the student from any public or private school in any state. This policy will be presented for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on April 13, 2026. Copies of the policy and Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

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Cell Phone Tower Lease Amendment

Mr. Lesiak requested approval of a second amendment to the Sprint Spectrum Realty Company (SSLP) cell tower lease agreement that the District has had in place since 2001. SSLP leases a small fenced area on the Oakdale Elementary property and will be adding a backup generator within the existing fenced area. The existing rental fee will increase by \$250 per month. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and lease amendment are included in the board documents folder.

Westside Education Association: Bargaining Agent for Sign Language Interpreters and Transliterators

Dr. Andrea Haynes, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and District Operations, and Ms. Becky Lowther, President of the Westside Education Association (WEA), asked for board approval of the WEA's request to serve as the exclusive bargaining agent for Sign Language Interpreters / Transliterators employed by Westside Community Schools for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years. Ms. Morrissette moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and WEA Letter 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 (two certified staff probationary contracts; eight certified staff resignations) for board approval. Dr. Van Gelder 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 two requests for Public Comment. Justin Dorsey - Robotics and Focus; Paul Vonderfecht - Ed. Tech.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings over the past two weeks including: Middle School Show Choir Finale; Westfest (district-wide strings and orchestra performance); walk-through at Hillside Elementary; Parent-Teacher Conferences; BOE Student Board Connection seminar; BOE Policy Subcommittee meeting; BOE Legislative Advocacy Subcommittee meeting; Bond Issuance planning meeting; and BOE / Superintendent 3:1 meetings. Dr. Lucas shared that the unveiling of the Douglas W. Krenzer Drive street sign will be held on Friday, May 15, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. Additional information will be shared with the Loveland school community.

Mr. Yale reviewed upcoming events:

March 26, 2026	Westside Unified Talent Show - WHS Auditorium - 6:00 p.m.
March 28, 2026	Loveland Elementary "One Last Look" - 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Week of March 30th	Staff Appreciation Week
April 3, 2026	Early Dismissal Day - WHS / West Campus @ 1:30pm; WMS @ 1:45pm; and PreK-6 @ 2:00 p.m.
April 6-10, 2026	Spring Break - No School

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April 7, 2026 Golden W Spring Coffee - Westside Middle School Cafeteria - 10:00 a.m.

April 13, 2026 Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.

April 15, 2026 K-8 Art Show - Regency Shopping Center - 5:30-6:30 p.m.

*** This event has since been rescheduled from April 16th to April 15th ***

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.



Beth Morrisette, Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF MEETING**

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3/20, 3/23 ZNEZ



Proof of Publication

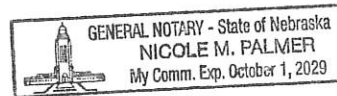
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Publication Name:
Omaha Daily Record

Publication URL:
www.omahadailyrecord.com

Publication City and State:
Omaha, NE

Publication County:
Douglas

Notice Popular Keyword Category:

Notice Keywords:
westside

Notice Authentication Number:
202603201114524871833
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Notice Content

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WCS Board of Education Meeting - March 23, 2026



Mar 10 2026 7:47 AM

The Westside Community Schools Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, March 23, 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)

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