

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Public Hearing and Meeting Minutes ~ April 27, 2026

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on April 27, 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 April 14, 2026, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on April 24 and 27, 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. *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.

Public Hearing for Student Fees for the 2026-2027 School Year

Mr. Yale advised those in attendance that the Public Hearing portion of the agenda is to hear opposition, support and observations regarding Student Fees for the 2026-2027 School Year, and that any resolution setting, altering or amending the Student Fees Policy (#6340) as a result of the hearing will be in accordance with Nebraska Revised Statutes, Section 79-2,125 through 2,134. Mr. Brain Gabriel, District Officer of Business and Finance, reviewed Policy 6340 and the following proposed changes for the 2026-2027 school year, including:

- Increase to school lunch prices (all levels)
- Clarifying language to the reimbursement for lost / damaged property fees for student-issued iPads (all levels)
- Addition of a fee for the cost of a Unified Cheer standard uniform

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Mr. Gabriel reminded the Board and those in attendance that the Student Fee fund budget is \$250,000, and that expenses are transferred in late August each fiscal year from the General Fund to “use” all revenue generated by the fund. Mr. Yale invited questions and comments from the board and from those in attendance. There were no questions from anyone in attendance. Revisions to Student Fees for 2026-2027 will be presented again for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on May 11, 2026. Copies of the Executive Summary and redline of Policy 6340, Appendix A are included in the board documents folder.

Communications

Ms. Elizabeth Power, Director of Communications and Engagement, welcomed Ms. Judy Stucky, WHS Science Teacher and a few members of the WHS Science Club (Axel L., Isaac P., Fayaz K., Aum N., Kathryn M., Norah S., and Gianna L.). Students shared about the evolution and growth of the club over the last several years and highlighted a number of activities and science competitions that they participate in each year including: Science Bowl; Science Olympiad; UNO Physics Day; Creighton Brain Day; Women in Science Day; and the Greater NE Science and Engineering Fair. The club meets twice weekly, and students expressed their enthusiasm for the growing interest in WHS Science Club. They have established a number of goals to help elevate the club’s competitiveness in the Metro and the State, and to expand student participation. They made a plea for an additional science club coach, and additional funding for the club / coach. Ultimately, they envision a robust science club as a way for students to: explore potential career pathways; gain access to scholarships and higher education opportunities; and develop and strengthen leadership skills.

Public Comment:

Student representatives from the Board of Education’s Student Board Connection 2026 Cohort presented “Public Comment” as part of their collaboration with the BOE during the second semester. Topics included: AP test prep; military service pathways; recognition for students who greatly exceed the Service Learning hours requirement; hallway / landing traffic flow at the high school; equity for EL students; parking; drop-off / pick-up traffic; PE credits for marching band and show choir; grading / weighting of grades; teacher rating survey for students; PT accommodations in P.E. classes for students going through rehabilitation.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Yale requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on April 13, 2026. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Blakely 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 April 22, 2026. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Ms. Morrissette abstained. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Treasurer’s Report

Dr. Van Gelder presented the treasurer’s report for March 2026 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$12,344,102; Ms. Rider seconded. March 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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Phase II Bond Project: MCL Construction GMP Contract Amendment for Loveland Elementary

Mr. Matt Herzog, Project Advocates, requested board approval of the Guaranteed Maximum (GMP) Amendment to the Construction Manager at Risk Contract with MCL Construction for Loveland Elementary. The proposed GMP value is \$23,495,709, and includes two early release work authorizations previously approved by the Board (\$4,576,460 on 2/9/26 for site demolition, site grading and precast materials; and \$7,859,686 on 4/13/26 for scopes of work related to fire suppression, site utilities, mechanical, electrical and plumbing). Construction on the school site is scheduled to begin in June 2026. Staff and students will move to the District's Swing School (108th & Grover) during construction. Ms. Morrissette moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and GMP Contract Amendment are included in the board documents folder.

District Facility Summer Projects

Dr. Lucas and Mr. Andy Wane, Director of Facilities, reviewed district facility maintenance and improvement projects scheduled for this summer. Planning for summer projects is an ongoing process that begins in late summer / early fall, when a preliminary list of projects is created. Mr. Wane advised that some projects are identified earlier (pre-planned) and then scheduled to align with budget considerations, funding and timing. All projects are aligned with district priorities and long-range facility plans including: safety and security; energy and operational efficiency; preventative maintenance and compliance; and improvements to the learning environment. Copies of the Executive Summary and list of 2026 Summer Projects are included in the board documents folder.

District Technology E-Rate Funding Authorizations

Dr. Matt Lee requested board approval to utilize E-Rate funding to update and refresh the District's internal connections with: (1) updated network switches and; (2) updated uninterruptible power supplies (UPS). These approvals are necessary to complete related USAC (Universal Service Administrative Co.) / E-Rate Program filings for telecommunication project reimbursements that provide discounts on connectivity for schools and libraries. Implementation of these projects and related expenditures are contingent upon the USAC approval of a minimum of 50% reimbursement of annual and project costs. Dr. Lee advised that CDW-G submitted bids for each project: \$74,228.18 for updates to network switches; and \$34,213.00 for updates to the UPS. Ms. Karnes moved for approval of CDW-G's bid in the amount of \$74,228.18 to refresh the district's internal connections with updated network switches, contingent upon USAC/E-Rate approval of a minimum of a 50% reimbursement of the annual cost; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Ms. Karnes moved for approval of CDW-G's bid in the amount of \$34,213.00 to refresh the district's internal connections with updated uninterruptible power supplies, contingent upon USAC/E-Rate approval of a minimum of a 50% reimbursement of the annual cost; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of Dr. Lee's Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Approval - #6350 and #6410

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, presented revisions to two existing policies for approval that were initially presented for board discussion and consideration on April 13, 2026.

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#6350 - Interscholastic Athletics: Responsibilities and Eligibility (Instruction) These revisions reflect updates to policy language and content as suggested by KSB's policy book. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

#6410 - Use of District Technology and Internet Safety (Instruction) These revisions reflect minor updates to language and defined terms. 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 Policies for Review - #5300 and #7100

Mr. Lesiak presented revisions to two existing policies for board consideration and discussion:

#5300 - Conduct (Students) Revisions reflect changes to how we handle short-term suspensions and are required due to passage of LB 653 this legislative term.

#7100 - Communications and School Community Relations (Community Relations) Minor revisions to defined terms.

These policies will be presented for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on May 11, 2026. Copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Approval of Sign Language Interpreter / Transliterater Negotiated Agreement for 2026-2027

Dr. Andrea Haynes, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and District Operations, and Ms. Becky Lowther, President of the Westside Education Association (WEA), requested board approval of the Negotiated Agreement for Sign Language Interpreters and Transliteraters for the 2026-2027 school year. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and the Negotiated Agreement 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 (seven certified staff probationary contracts) for board approval. Dr. Haynes highlighted that four of the seven new teachers are from the District's "Grow Our Own" cohort. 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.

American Civics Curriculum (Written Report)

A copy of Dr. Weichel's written report is included in the board documents folder.

Public Comment regarding American Civics Curriculum

There were no requests for public comment regarding American Civics curriculum.

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Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings over the past two weeks including: walkthroughs at Oakdale, Paddock Road, Sunset Hills, Westgate, WMS and West Campus; K-8 Art Fair; WMS Track Meet; WHS Girls Reserve Tennis; 3:1 Meetings with Dr. Lucas; Key Communicators Meeting; Bond Oversight Committee Meeting; Special Meeting of the Board to approve a personnel report; American Civics and Board Policy subcommittee meetings; Meet & Greet reception for Dr. Jessop and Dr. Easton; Student Board Connection. Mr. Yale reviewed upcoming events:

- May 2, 2026 WCS Multicultural Fair - Westside High School - 12 Noon - 3:00 p.m.
- May 7, 2026 Arts For Me Exhibit and Reception - Kaneko Art Gallery - 4:30- 6:30 p.m.
- May 11, 2026 Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.
- May 14, 2026 Project SEARCH Graduation - Children's Nebraska - 9:30 a.m.
- May 14, 2026 Blakely / Morrissette Reception - Westside House - 4:00-5:30 p.m.
- May 15, 2026 Unveiling of Douglas W. Krenzer Drive street sign - Loveland Elementary - 4:00 p.m.
- May 17, 2026 WHS Commencement - Baxter Arena - 2:00 p.m.
- May 18, 2026 Bond Oversight Committee Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.
- May 20, 2026 Early Dismissal Schedule: 1:30 @ WHS, West Campus; 1:45 @ WMS; 2:00 for PreK-6
All Staff End of Year Celebration - WHS Auditorium - 2:45 p.m.
- May 22, 2026 Last Day of School - Dismissal at 12:00 Noon - all grades

Pilot Funds Litigation

Mr. Yale advised the audience that this next item on the agenda is consideration of information from legal counsel regarding pending litigation, and that discussion of these matters in closed session is necessary to protect the public's interest, to maintain attorney-client privilege and is permitted by law. Mr. Yale requested a motion to enter closed session. Ms. Karnes moved for the Board to enter closed session to discuss pending litigation and to receive and discuss legal advice from the District's attorney, both of which are necessary to protect the public's interest and to maintain attorney-client privilege, and is permitted by law. Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Yale stated that the Board had adopted a motion to enter closed session to discuss pending litigation and to receive and discuss legal advice from the District's attorney, both of which are necessary to protect the public's interest and to maintain attorney-client privilege, and is permitted by law. The Board will limit itself to discussion of these issues. The Board entered closed session at 7:31 p.m. The Board exited closed session at 7:54 p.m.

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.


Beth Morrissette, Secretary, Board of Education

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Friday, April 24, 2026

Notice Content

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WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NOTICE OF MEETING

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 April 27, 2026, at 6:00 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.

4/24, 4/27 ZNEZ

Web display limited to 1,000 characters. Please view the PDF for the complete Public Notice.

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WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROOF OF PUBLICATION

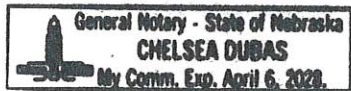
The undersigned hereby certifies that a Notice of Meeting for the Board of Education, a copy of which is attached hereto, was placed on the home page of the website of Westside Community Schools (www.westside66.org) beginning on April 14, 2026, and that it appeared there continuously up through the time of the scheduled board meeting.

MOLLY HURLEY
Name

ASSISTANT TO SUPERINTENDENT
Title

STATE OF NEBRASKA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF DOUGLAS)

Before me, a Notary Public, qualified in and for said County and State, personally came Molly Hurley, known to me to be the identical person, and signed the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged the execution of this document to his or her voluntary deed.



Chelsea Dubas
Notary Public

WCS Board of Education Meeting - April 27, 2026



Apr 14 2026 7:47 AM

The Westside Community Schools Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, April 27, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. This meeting will include a Public Hearing on Student Fees for the 2026-2027 school year. 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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