

## WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

### Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ May 11, 2026

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The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on May 11, 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 28, 2026, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on May 8 and 11, 2026, 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, Molly Hurley, Kim De La Cruz, Kami Jessop, Kelcy Tapp, Laura Mann, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, Jake Ritonya.

**Others in Attendance\*:** Stephanie Adams, Teddy Adams, Carolyn Roeder, Paul Vonderfecht, Matt Sorensen, Niki Fuller, Sarah Ocken. \*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 April 27, 2026. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Ms. Morrissette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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

Dr. Van Gelder presented the treasurer's report for April 2026 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$12,761,825; Ms. Karnes seconded. April 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, welcomed representatives from Children's Nebraska who announced Project ADAM Heart-Safe School Designations for all of our district school buildings. Project ADAM recognizes schools that demonstrate strong cardiac emergency preparedness through awareness, training, and a practiced response plan. Schools earn this designation by meeting the standards outlined in the [Heart Safe School Checklist](#), reflecting their commitment to a safer environment for students, staff, and visitors. [projectadam.com/](http://projectadam.com/)

### **Anti-Defamation League - No Place For Hate**

Dr. Mark Weichel, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, welcomed Mr. Bill Hicks, Program Director for the Anti-Defamation League's Central Division. Mr. Hicks commended the District for its commitment to the ADL's No Place For Hate initiative, which was founded in 1999 as a proactive way for schools to combat hate. The No Place for Hate programming - customizable to each school and grade level - provides a framework for schools to build inclusive, bias-free communities. Westside Community Schools is the only K-12 district in the state to have earned the No Place for Hate designation in every building. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

### **Approval of Student Fees for the 2026-2027 School Year (Policy 6340)**

Mr. Brian Gabriel, District Office of Business and Finance, requested approval of proposed changes to Student Fees for the 2026-2027 school year that were previously presented at the Student Fees Public Hearing on April 27, 2026.

- 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

Mr. Gabriel reminded the Board 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. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Morrissette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and redline of Policy 6340, Appendix A are included in the board documents folder.

### **Approval of District's 5-Year Strategic Plan**

Dr. Mike Lucas requested board approval of the District's 5-Year Strategic Plan for the 2026-27; 2027-28; 2028-29; 2029-30; and 2030-31 school years, developed over the past year with a focus on improving and refining the work of the 2021-2026 strategic plan. A significant number of the new strategic plan's objectives represent a pledge to maintain the efforts that have already made a positive impact across each of the four primary target areas: Teaching and Learning; Human Relations; Communications; and Infrastructure, which includes finance, technology, facilities, and nutritional services. The 2026 to 2031 Strategic Plan will be introduced to staff and the community at the All-Staff Back-to-School event at Baxter Arena in August.

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In addition, an updated strategic plan dashboard will be launched this fall and made accessible on the district website to support transparency and ongoing progress monitoring. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and Strategic Plan are included in the board documents folder.

### **Board Policies for Approval - #5300 and #7100**

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 27, 2026.

#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. Ms. Morrissette moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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

### **Board Policies for Review - #1220 and #5230**

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

#1220 - Public Meetings: Agendas, Notifications, Weather Delays & Minutes (*Board of Education*)

LB 596 amends the Open Meetings Act's notice requirements. Previously, notices of board meetings were required to be published in the newspaper, with several exceptions. Now, notices of regular meetings only need to be published four times per year.

#5230 - Graduation: Class of 2025 and beyond (*Students*)

LB 296 amended Nebraska's graduation statute to provide an exception for students who, at some point during their high school career, were under the supervision of a juvenile court. These changes to Policy 5230 incorporate this new statutory exception into the graduation criteria.

These policies will be presented for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on June 15, 2026. Copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

### **Sale / Disposal of District Equipment (Policy 3450)**

Dr. Lucas requested board approval for the sale of surplus equipment and furniture from all school buildings and the Service Center at two public sales the district will hold later this month. Westside staff will have the opportunity to claim items at no charge, only if the item is to be used in their classroom or building. At that time, our Building Service staff or designated moving company will move these items to the identified classroom or building. Staff will have the opportunity to purchase any items they wish to claim for their own personal use. The public sales are scheduled for Friday, May 29, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Westbrook Elementary, and Saturday, May 30, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Loveland Elementary.

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Additionally, Dr. Matt Lee, Director of Technology, requested board approval to donate a used 3D printer from the WHS Skilled & Technical Sciences Department to Battle Creek High School. Ms. Morrissette moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the public sale flier and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

**Approval of Compensation for Non-Negotiated Certified and Classified Employee Groups**

Dr. Haynes presented compensation for current non-negotiated certified and classified employee groups for the 2026-2027 school year. Each year, recommendations are made to base pay increases for non-negotiated employees, taking into consideration salary increases of other negotiated employee groups, along with various staffing needs. The following base pay increases are presented for board approval:

For the following employee groups:

For the 2026-2027 school year, Ms. Blakely moved to approve a 3.10% wage increase for all currently employed, and a starting base wage increase of 2.50% for:

Professional Classified staff - 10 and 12 Month; Administrative Assistant staff - 10 and 12 Month; Educational Assistants; Nurses; Part-Time Building Service Grounds and Special Skills staff; Building Service and Nutrition Service Leadership staff; Access 66 staff; Brailist; Transportation staff; and Collaborative Pianist / Accompanist.

Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

For the following employee groups:

For the 2026-2027 school year, Ms. Rider moved to approve a 3.20% wage increase for all currently employed, and a starting base wage increase of 2.70% for:

Technology staff and Part-Time Building Service Custodians

Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

For Part-Time Building Services:

For the 2026-2027 school year, Ms. Karnes moved to approve an additional paid holiday for all Part-Time Building Service Employees; Dr. Van Gelder seconded; Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

For Education Assistants:

For the 2026-2027 school year, Dr. Van Gelder moved to approve an additional Long Term Service Increment of \$0.15 for every 5 years of employment as an Educational Assistant; Ms. Morrissette seconded; Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

For Administrators:

For the 2026-2027 school year, Ms. Morrissette moved to approve an average base wage increase of 3.02% for all currently employed administrators. Ms. Blakely seconded; Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

For Non-Certified Substitutes

For the 2026-2027 school year, Ms. Blakely moved to approve an increase to the hourly rate so it is equal to that of the new starting base wage of each relevant group for non-certified substitutes; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

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

Dr. Haynes presented the personnel report (one certified staff probationary contract) for board approval. Ms. Karnes 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.

**Approval of Eighth Amendment to the Superintendent Employment Contract**

Ms. Blakely moved for approval of a three-year contract for Dr. Mike Lucas as Superintendent, commencing July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2029, with compensation in 2026-2027 to include a base salary of \$278,339.84; and all other provisions as are set forth in the proposed Eighth Amendment to Employment Agreement and accompanying Superintendent Transparency Notice that has appeared on the District's website continuously since May 8, 2026; and to designate the Board President to sign the contract; Ms. Morrissette seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Eighth Amendment to the Superintendent Agreement and the Superintendent Pay Transparency Notice are included in the board documents folder.

**Student Wellness Annual Progress Report -Policy 5660 (Written Report)**

Written report submitted by Dr. Mark Weichl, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and Mr. Erin Vik, Director of Nutrition Services, is included in the board documents folder.

**Public Comment**

There was one request for Public Comment: Paul Vonderfecht, EdTech data.

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

Mr. Yale, Ms. Karnes, Dr. Van Gelder and Ms. Rider took this opportunity to express their appreciation and gratitude to Ms. Blakely and Ms. Morrissette for their 12 years of service on the Board of Education. Elected to their first term in 2014, both will be concluding their second term at the end of the month. Board members thanked them for their leadership, and the knowledge and expertise they brought to the many difficult decisions the board is tasked with making. *"Thank you, Beth and Dana, for your many years of dedication and commitment to our students and staff, and to the mission of Westside Community Schools."*

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings over the past two weeks including: Westside Multicultural Fair (attend and volunteer); Oakdale Elementary Spring Fling; "Arts for Me" art exhibition at Kaneko Art Gallery; walkthroughs at Sunset, Oakdale, WMS, WHS, Westbrook, Underwood Hills/ECC & i66; WMS choir night; WHS choir night; Evening of Show Choirs; and Policy subcommittee meeting.

**Board of Education Meeting**

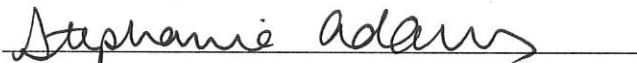
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Mr. Yale reviewed upcoming events:

- 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
- May 25, 2026 Memorial Day - District Offices Closed

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

  
Secretary, Board of Education

**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 May 11, 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.

5/8, 5/11 ZNEZ



***Proof of Publication***

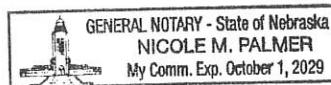
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
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County of Douglas,  
City of Omaha } ss.

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:

5/8/26                      5/11/26  
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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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Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before  
me this MAY 11 2026

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Douglas County, State of Nebraska

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5/8, 5/11 ZNEZ

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## **WCS Board of Education Meeting - May 11, 2026**



Apr 28 2026 7:47 AM

The Westside Community Schools Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, May 11, 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