

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ July 13, 2026

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on July 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, Nebraska.

Board members present: Kris Karnes, President
Meagan Van Gelder, Vice President
Sarah Rider, Treasurer
Sean Conway, Treasurer-Elect
Stephanie Adams, Secretary

Board member absent (excused): Adam Yale, 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 June 16, 2026, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on July 10 and 13, 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, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, Jake Ritonya, Melanie Connolly, Brian Gabrial, Elizabeth Power, Stephanie Easton, Kayla Fowler.

Others in Attendance*: Leah Baker, Mandi Dilling. *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.

Ms. Karnes called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. She 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. She acknowledged that the meeting had been publicly announced and the agenda was available to any interested parties. Board Meeting attendance is noted above. Ms. Karnes requested a motion for an excused absence for Mr. Yale. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Karnes requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on June 15, 2026. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Mr. Conway seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Rider presented the treasurer's report for June 2026 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$15,133,010; Mr. Conway seconded. June 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 district highlights. Our youngest learners (birth to age 5) have been enjoying Cub Club this summer at Westbrook Elementary, in partnership with Buffett Early Childhood Institute. Two more sessions are scheduled for July 14 and July 21. The Swing School is beginning to look like home for Loveland Elementary staff and students, who will return to school there next month. The new Loveland Elementary is scheduled to be ready in January 2028. Upcoming ribbon-cutting events: Paddock Road and Rockbrook on August 11th for their new gymnasiums and early childhood spaces; and August 17th (5:30 p.m.) at WHS for the new cafeteria, restrooms, locker rooms and the Life Complex.

Review of Facility Projects at Westside Middle School - Summer 2027

Dr. Mike Lucas provided an overview of two exciting projects coming up at Westside Middle School: **1)** Improvements in the Performing Arts Center that will include an enlarged stage and upgrades to the sound and lighting systems; and **2)** Improvements and enhancements to the WMS track and field, including a new artificial turf field and additional support facilities (restrooms, concessions, press box). These improvements will allow the district to better accommodate the ever-expanding opportunities for our students (i.e. - lacrosse, rugby, Special Olympics); provide a venue to accommodate community-wide events; and enhance the overall experience for students and families. Both projects are scheduled to begin in late Spring 2027 with completion in Fall of 2027. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

Approval of Project Proposal for WMS Performing Arts Center Upgrades

Mr. Matt Herzog, Project Advocates, requested approval of the proposal from TACKarchitects in the amount of \$175,000 for the WMS Performing Arts Center project. Over the past year, TACK has collaborated on several occasions with the middle school performing arts team and administration to review multiple design concepts for expanding the stage and enhancing the venue for larger productions. The capabilities of the PAC will be significantly enhanced through this project. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Project Proposal and Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Approval of Design Contract for Westside Middle School Track and Field Project

Mr. Herzog requested approval of the design and engineering contract with Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture for the WMS track and field project, with a total estimated project budget of \$7.5 million. Project Advocates issued Requests for Qualifications on May 21, 2026, for Architectural Design and Engineering Services for this project, which include a new track, an artificial turf field, a restroom and concession building, and a press box. Proposals were due by 3:00 p.m. on June 15, 2026. Project Advocates received six proposals; four firms were selected for interviews, which were held on June 23, 2026. The interview committee included Mike Lucas, Andy Wane, Dan Carlson, Matt Herzog, Terry Liebentritt, and board member Stephanie Adams. Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture was selected for the project. The district, with assistance from Project Advocates, will be forming a design team in the coming weeks. Ms. Adams moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and Design and Engineering Contract are included in the board documents folder.

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Annual Review of NE State Aid

Mr. Brian Gabriel, District Officer of Business and Finance, presented the annual review of NE State Aid for education. Though Westside Community Schools does not receive TEEOSA Equalization Aid (provided only to districts with needs that are greater than their resources), the district will receive a total of \$30.3 M in other state aid for FY27 through: Net Option funding; Allocated Income Tax; Community Achievement Plan Aid; and Foundation Aid. This is slightly higher than FY26, which was \$29.15 M. Upcoming budget presentations include: FY26 Budget Amendment Public Hearing on 8/24/26; FY27 Budget Update on 8/24/26; FY27 Budget Public Hearing on 9/8/26; FY27 Property Tax Request Public Hearing on 9/21/26; approval of FY27 Budget on 9/21/26; and approval of FY26 Property Tax Request on 10/5/26. Copies of the Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Approval - #4770

Dr. Andrea Haynes (presenting on behalf of Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel), presented revisions to one existing policy for approval that Mr. Lesiak initially presented for board discussion and consideration on June 15, 2026.

#4770 - Recognition of Employee Organizations (Personnel)

LB 429 requires the District to provide equal access to any professional employees' organization (as defined in the policy and statute) if the same access is given to one professional employees' organization. These changes reflect this new requirement. Mr. Conway moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the 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. Haynes presented the personnel report (one certified staff probationary contract) 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.

Public Comment

There were three requests for Public Comment: Mandi Dilling, iPads; Leah Baker, Ed Tech use in schools; Wyn Sipple, Civic Engagement.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at the following events recently: Middle School Honors Choir performance at Peru State. Currently no special legislative sessions are scheduled. Ms. Karnes reviewed upcoming events:

July 27-28, 2026	All Admin Jim Tangdall Leadership Retreat - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Lauritzen Gardens)
August 5, 2026	WMS Student Orientation - 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
August 6, 2026	All Staff Back to School Meeting - 7:30 - 10:00 a.m. - Baxter Arena
August 10, 2026	Board of Education Meeting - 5:00 p.m. - ABC Building
August 11, 2026	Elementary Open House Night - District-wide

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August 13, 2026	First Day of School
August 17, 2026	WHS Cafeteria Ribbon Cutting & Open House - 5:30 p.m. - Westside High School
August 17, 2026	Bond Oversight Committee Meeting - 6:00 p.m. - Westside High School
August 24, 2026	Board of Education Meeting - 6:00 p.m. - ABC Building

There being no further business, Ms. Karnes adjourned the meeting at 5:49 p.m.


Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF MEETING**

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7/10, 7/13 ZNEZ



The Daily Record

Proof of Publication

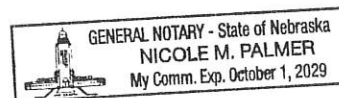
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County of Douglas,
City of Omaha } ss.

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:

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Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before
me this JULY 13 2026

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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:

202607131537332136493

3452599035

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Notice Content

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7/10, 7/13 ZNEZ

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Notary Public

WCS Board of Education Meeting - July 13, 2026



Jun 16 2026 7:47 AM

The Westside Community Schools Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 5:00 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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