

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes ~ August 10, 2026

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on August 10, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, Nebraska.

Board members present: Kris Karnes, President
Sarah Rider, Treasurer
Sean Conway, Treasurer-Elect
Stephanie Adams, Secretary
Adam Yale, Director

Board member absent (excused): Meagan Van Gelder, 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 July 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 July 30 and 31, 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 was 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, Brian Gabrial, Nick Lesiak, Molly Hurley, Kami Jessop, Kelcy Tapp, Laura Mann, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, Jake Ritonya.

Others in Attendance*: Jacque Torson, Maddie Torson. *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 Meeting and Public Hearing 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. Attendance is noted above. Ms. Karnes requested a motion for an excused absence for Dr. Van Gelder. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Mr. Yale seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

LB71 Public Hearing / Policy 6320

Ms. Karnes stated that the purpose of the Public Hearing is to hear input from parents, guardians, and educational decision makers regarding Board Policy 6320, which covers how such persons may: (a) access testing information and curriculum; and (b) request that a child be excused from specific instruction or activities.

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, reviewed LB71, which gives parents, guardians, and educational decision makers greater access to information about and involvement in educational practices. The requirements of LB71 must be reflected in school district policy.

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Ms. Karnes invited questions from the Board of Education regarding LB71 and Policy #6320. There were no questions. She then invited public comment regarding LB71 and Policy #6320. There were no requests for public comment. Ms. Karnes adjourned the Public Hearing at 5:03 p.m. and proceeded with the Board Meeting agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Karnes requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on July 13, 2026. Mr. Conway moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote, with Mr. Yale abstaining.

Communications

Dr. Lucas provided a communications update in Ms. Power's absence. Westside Middle School students attended orientation throughout the day on August 5th to pick up their schedules, find lockers, get pictures taken and so much more! Open House Night for all pre-K through grade 6 students and families is tomorrow, August 11th; and fall sports practices and tryouts are underway at Westside High School. Teachers new to Westside Community Schools began their training and orientation on July 30th at a luncheon with their building leaders, the district admin team and members of the Board of Education. Returning district staff gathered on August 6th at Baxter Arena to kick off the 2026-27 school year. The new One World School-Based Health Clinic, located at Hillside Elementary, is open and available to all families and staff in the WCS community.

Update on Instructional Technology for the 2026-2027 School Year

Dr. Mike Lucas provided an overview of the technology use guidelines that were sent to all K-8 families last Friday and include some adjustments for the 2026-2027 school year. Each year, the district's EdTech Committee evaluates how technology is being used to ensure that it is intentional and educational, and that students are active participants in their learning. Dr. Lucas noted that teachers do have flexibility in their classroom to balance digital learning with hands-on, non-technology activities that reflect the ebb and flow of the curriculum and lessons. Dr. Lucas also reminded the Board and those in attendance that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not part of any curriculum and that staff and students are not required to use AI. Rather, the district's goal with AI is to help interested students and staff use it ethically and in a manner that supports learning. Copies of the K-6 and 7-8 Technology Use Guidelines are included in the board document folder.

Annual Review of District Safety and Security Protocols

Mr. Jake Ritonya, Director of Safety and Security, provided an overview of key developments and improvements in the district's safety and security protocols, including integration with the Omaha Police Department's Real-Time Operation Center. Security enhancements at WHS include: biometric student entry during before and after school activities; addition of position sensors on every door and alarms on high-violation access points; and reconfiguration of cameras across the facility to fill coverage gaps and eliminate high-risk blind spots. The district's Safety and Health Steering Committee collaborated with a newly formed Reunification Team that held training in July 2026 on Raptor Emergency Management Reunification software.

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Mr. Ritonya expressed that one of the most important elements of our district's safety and security begins with our people (staff, students, families) and the establishment of rigorous "No Door-Propping" protocols, and the principles of A.L.I.C.E. Training (Alert - Lockdown - Inform - Counter - Evacuate). Copies of Mr. Ritonya's Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Special Services Report: Student Behavior Programming

Dr. Kami Jessop, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, provided an overview of the district's expansion of in-district behavioral support programming to better serve our students and to reduce the number of out-of-district placements. Dr. Jessop thanked the Board for their support in making this additional programming possible, which will provide: an increase in capacity with the existing K-6 i66 program; the addition of a K-6 i66 program for students with complex learning needs; and a new Alternate to Suspension (ASP) program for K-6 students. All of the K-6 i66 programming is located on the Westbrook campus. Also new this year will be an i66 pilot program for grades 7-8 that will be located at West Campus. Dr. Jessop reiterated that supporting our students with behavioral challenges in-district allows their learning to continue in a familiar environment, using Westside curriculum, for the duration of the i66 placement. Copies of Dr. Jessop's Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Annual Review of Policy #6320

Mr. Lesiak requested approval of policy #6320, reaffirmed by the Board with no changes, as discussed at the Public Hearing portion of tonight's meeting. Mr. Yale moved for approval; Ms. Adams seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the policy, LB71 and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Review (#3330; #3450)

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

3330 - District-Owned Vehicles (Business)

Modifications to this policy include language suggested by KSB's policy book (e.g. vehicles should only be used for District business, no texting and driving, no drugs or alcohol (etc.), and all accidents, tickets (etc.) have to be reported immediately).

3450 - Disposition of Damaged and Outdated School Books, Furniture and Equipment (Business)

Revisions were made to this policy so it states in plain language that the board may sell school property as provided in statute 79-10,114, rather than quoting the entire statute directly.

Policies will be presented again for approval at the August 24, 2026, Board of Education Meeting. Copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Approval of Superintendent Goals for the 2026-2027 School Year

Dr. Lucas presented the Superintendent Goals and Priorities for the 2026-2027 school year for Board approval. The establishment of these goals and priorities is a collaborative effort between the Superintendent and the Board of Education, and aligns with the Superintendent Performance Assessment that is completed in the spring of each year. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Mr. Yale seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and Goals and Priorities are included in the board documents folder.

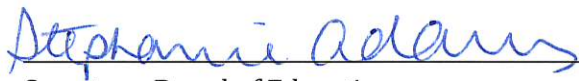
Public Comment: There were no requests for public comment:

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings, including: WHS Little Warriors Theater Camp performance; New Teacher luncheon on July 30th; All Staff Back to School Meeting at Baxter on August 6th; BOE Policy Committee; 3:1 meetings with Dr. Lucas; and tour of West Campus. Ms. Karnes reviewed the following upcoming activities:

August 11, 2026	Elementary Open House Night - District-wide Ribbon Cutting @ Paddock Road (New Gymnasium & ECC Classrooms) - 5:00p.m. Ribbon Cutting @ Rockbrook (New Gymnasium & ECC Classrooms) - 6:30 p.m.
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 5:53 p.m.


Secretary, Board of Education

**WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
MEETING NOTICE**

Westside Community Schools, District 66 (the "District"), generally schedules two regular board meetings on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month, August through April. In December, May, June and July, the District generally schedules one regular board meeting for the second Monday of the month. Regular board meetings are typically held at the **District Administration Office (ABC Building), 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, NE 68114**. Official meeting notices for each regular and special meeting, including the date, time and location, will be posted on the District's website. Please check our website at westside66.org for all meeting notices, as the date, time, or location may change. Upcoming regular board meeting dates are: **8/10/26; 8/24/26; 9/8/26; 9/21/26.**

7/30, 7/31 ZNEZ

The Daily Record

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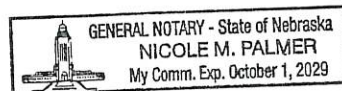
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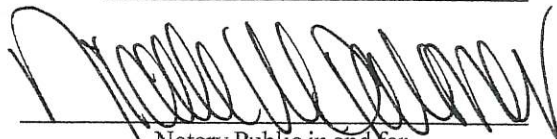
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Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before
me this JULY 31 2026


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Friday, July 31, 2026

Notice Content

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WCS Board of Education Meeting & Public Hearing - August 10, 2026



Jul 14 2026 7:47 AM

The Westside Community Schools Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, August 10, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the District Administration Office - ABC Building - 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, NE, and will include a Public Hearing regarding Board Policy 6320 (Review of Educational Materials). [Click here for a link to the agenda and meeting documents.](#) ([/fs/pages/2727](#))

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