

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting and FY27 Budget Public Hearing Minutes

September 8, 2026

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on September 8, 2026, at 6:00 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
- 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 August 25, 2026, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on September 3 and 4, 2026, and on their website at omahadailyrecord.com, as well as the NE Press Association website at nepublicnotices.com. A copy of the FY27 Budget Summary was also posted in the Daily Record and on the NE Press Association website on 8/31, 9/1, 9/2, 9/3 and 9/4, 2026. 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, Matt Lee, Kami Jessop, Kim De La Cruz, Kelcy Tapp, Elizabeth Power, Robert Aranda, Jake Ritonya, Kayla Fowler.

Others in Attendance*: Ariel Panowicz, Elizabeth Watkins, Jensyn Bell. *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 FY27 Budget Public Hearing and Board Meeting to order at 6:00 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. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Hearing: FY27 Budget

Ms. Karnes stated that the purpose of the Public Hearing was to hear support, opposition, or observations relating to the proposed budgets for School District 66 for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Mr. Brian Gabrial, District Officer of Business and Finance, reviewed expected budget expenditures for both levy and non-levy funds for FY27.

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Levy Fund budgets for FY27 total \$174,187,663. (General Fund - \$111,113,378; Special Building Fund - \$51,248,796; Bond Fund - \$11,795,489; Employee Benefit Fund - \$30,000).

Non-Levy Fund budgets for FY27 total \$10,795,835. (School Nutrition Fund - \$8,495,835; Activities Fund - \$2,000,000; Student Fee Fund - \$300,000).

Total for all FY27 budgets is \$184,983,498, which is a decrease of \$32,323,696 (14.87%) from the amended FY26 budget that totaled \$217,307,194. Due to sufficient reserves being maintained, the need for short-term borrowing through TANs (Tax Anticipation Note) will not be required in FY27. The Public Hearing on the property tax levy will be held on September 22, 2026. Approval of the FY27 budget will also occur at the September 22nd Board of Education Meeting. The budget is due to the State Auditor, the County Clerk and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) on September 30, 2026.

Ms. Karnes invited questions or comments from the Board, as well as from those in attendance. There were no questions from the Board and no comments from those in attendance. Copies of Mr. Gabriel's Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Karnes requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting and FY26 Budget Amendment Public Hearing held on August 24, 2026. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Mr. Conway seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Communications

Ms. Elizabeth Power, Director of Communications and Community Engagement, shared student, staff and community highlights, including: WMS 8th grade student Lucy Beutler recently received the Omaha Community Playhouse Jim Eisenhardt Outstanding Youth Award for her role as Jane Banks in their recent production of *Mary Poppins*. Ms. Power shared a short video titled "*Super Conversations*" that features Dr. Lucas engaged in discussions with a few of our students at Paddock Road and Westgate Elementary, learning about their favorite subjects, favorite school lunch, favorite teachers, and what they aspire to do when they grow up. 5 out of 5 stars! And next week is Homecoming Week! The parade will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 16th at 6:30 p.m.; fireworks following the football game on Friday, Sept. 18th; and the dance on Saturday, Sept. 19th will be held at the high school.

School Update: Westside High School

Dr. Jay Dostal, WHS Principal, shared great news about Westside High School. A copy of Dr. Dostal's School Update is included in the board documents folder.

Bond Oversight Committee Semi-Annual Report to the Board for Phase II

Mr. Matt Herzog, Project Advocates, and Mr. Ryan Decker, Bond Oversight Committee Chair, presented the semi-annual update on Phase II Bond Projects. Phase II projects that are finished have been completed on time and on budget. Great progress was made this summer on the Westbrook building envelope and HVAC upgrades; this work will continue on a phased schedule in the summers of 2027 and 2028 when school is not in session. Construction of the new Loveland Elementary has begun, with demolition work completed and site-grading well underway.

Through diligent oversight and fiscal management of Bond Phase II funds, the District has been able to add scope to Phase II above the initial \$121M in projects. Those include: district security infrastructure; fluid cooler at WHS; WMS Performing Arts Center enhancements and improvements; and additional enhancements at Westbrook Elementary, including mechanical system upgrades, new furniture, interior remodels and the addition of collaboration spaces that align with district Edspecs. Copies of the Executive Summary, slide presentation and Phase II program schedule are included in the board documents folder.

Special Education Services at Non-Public Schools within District 66 Boundaries

Dr. Stephanie Easton, Director of Special Services, presented an overview of the services that Westside Community Schools provides to all non-public schools within the district's boundaries as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). "Child Find" <https://childfind.nebraska.gov/> is a legal requirement under IDEA that requires public school districts to find, locate, and evaluate children within their district boundaries who may need special education or early intervention services. Westside Community Schools provides this service to the current eight nonpublic and home schools that are within District 66 boundaries. WCS nonpublic allocated resources for 2026-2027 include: 3.0 FTE Special Education Teachers; 1.7 FTE Speech Language Pathologists; 1.0 FTE School Psychologist; 3.0 FTE Educational Assistants; and District Coordinator Supervision. WCS consistently exceeds minimum requirements to ensure families have access to the services they need for their children to thrive. Copies of Dr. Easton's Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policy for Approval (#7165)

Mr. Nick Lesiak, District In-House Legal Counsel, presented revisions to policy 7165 (*Advisory Committees to the Board*) for approval. Revisions reflect minor language updates and were previously presented for board discussion and consideration at the August 24, 2026, Board of Education meeting. Mr. Yale moved for approval; Ms. Adams seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A redline copy of policy 7165 and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Review (#4470, #6100)

Mr. Lesiak presented minor revisions to policies 4470 (*Recognition of Service*) and 6100 (*Accreditation*) for discussion and consideration. Updates to both policies reflect minor revisions to standardized terms. Both policies will be presented for approval at the September 22, 2026, Board of Education meeting. Redline copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Public Comment: There were four requests for public comment: Jensyn Bell, shock gloves; Chase Piper, opposed to shock gloves in Westside; Elizabeth Watkins, SRO weaponry; Spike Eickholt, ACLU of NE and Education Rights Counsel, use of electric-shock gloves in schools by SROs.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings, including: WHS Life Complex ribbon-cutting event for the Olson Family Foundation College, Career and Life Readiness Center; property tax discussion with local leaders; WE-SIDE Steering Committee; WHS football game; and new school board member orientation meetings with Sean Kelley and Terry Hanna.

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Ms. Karnes reviewed the following upcoming activities:

Sept. 14, 2026	Bond Oversight Committee Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.
Sept. 16, 2026	Homecoming Parade and Pep Rally - WHS - 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 22, 2026	Board of Education Meeting & FY27 Proposed Property Tax Request Public Hearing - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m. (REVISED DATE)
October 5, 2026	Board of Education Meeting - ABC Building - 6:00 p.m.
October 7, 2026	Parent / Teacher Conferences - 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
October 8, 2026	Parent / Teacher Conferences - 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (No School for Students)
October 9, 2026	Fall Break - No School
October 12, 2026	Professional Development Day (No School for Students)

There being no further business, Ms. Karnes adjourned the meeting at 7:17 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: **9/8/26: 9/22/26: 10/5/26: 10/19/26.**

9/3, 9/4 ZNEZ

The Daily Record

Proof of Publication

JASON W. HUFF, Publisher

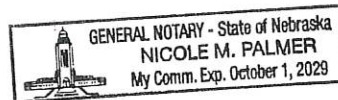
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
The State of Nebraska,
District of Nebraska,
County of Douglas,
City of Omaha } ss.

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:

9/3/26

9/4/26

That said Newspaper during that time was regularly published and in general circulation in the County of Douglas, and State of Nebraska.



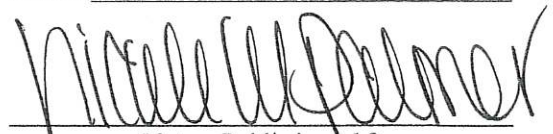
Publisher's Fee \$37.38

Additional Copies \$

Filing Fee \$

Total \$37.38

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me this SEPTEMBER 04 2026



Notary Public in and for
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Notice Publish Date:

Friday, September 04, 2026

Notice Content

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9/3, 9/4 ZNEZ

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NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING AND BUDGET SUMMARY

Westside Community Schools (28-0066) in Douglas County, Nebraska

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given, in compliance with the provisions of State Statute Sections 13-501 to 13-513, that the governing body will meet on the 8th day of September, 2026 at 6 o'clock, PM, at 909 South 76th Street, Omaha, NE for the purpose of hearing support, opposition, criticism, suggestions or observations of taxpayers relating to the following proposed budget and to consider amendments relative thereto. The budget detail is available at the office of the Clerk/Secretary during regular business hours. For more information on statewide receipts and expenditures, and to compare cost per pupil and performance to other school districts, go to: <https://nep.education.ne.gov>

FUNDS	Actual Disbursements & Transfers	Actual/Estimated Disbursements & Transfers	Budgeted Disbursements & Transfers	Necessary Cash Reserve (4)	Total Available Resources Before Property Taxes (5)	Total Personal and Real Property Tax Requirement (7)
	2024-2025 (1)	2025-2026 (2)	2026-2027 (3)			
General	\$ 96,642,125.45	\$ 100,685,571.99	\$ 111,113,378.08	\$ 24,819,033.00	\$ 94,593,266.41	\$ 41,756,711.67
Depreciation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Employee Benefit	\$ 47,522.42	\$ 33,413.59	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -
Contingency	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Activities	\$ 1,641,563.89	\$ 1,291,129.95	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 505,729.33	\$ 2,505,729.33	\$ -
School Nutrition	\$ 8,112,231.42	\$ 8,380,282.56	\$ 8,495,834.72	\$ -	\$ 8,495,834.72	\$ -
Bond	\$ 47,731,985.60	\$ 13,909,029.51	\$ 11,795,489.25	\$ 13,195,043.49	\$ 13,365,552.15	\$ 11,742,404.59
Special Building	\$ 70,813,480.16	\$ 50,788,708.02	\$ 51,248,795.78	\$ -	\$ 47,433,228.73	\$ 3,854,108.05
Qualified Capital Purpose Undertaking	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cooperative	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Student Fee	\$ 116,115.53	\$ 121,046.05	\$ 300,000.00	\$ -	\$ 300,000.00	\$ -
TOTALS	\$ 225,105,024.47	\$ 175,209,181.67	\$ 184,983,497.83	\$ 38,519,805.82	\$ 166,723,611.34	\$ 57,353,224.31

Bond Purposes		Non-Bond Purposes		Total
Breakdown of Property Tax	\$ 11,742,404.59	\$	45,610,819.72	\$ 57,353,224.31

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Board of Education Meeting + FY27 Budget Public Hearing
September 8, 2026

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 AUGUST 25,, 2026, and that it appeared there continuously up through the time of the scheduled board meeting.

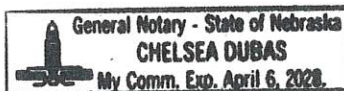
MOLLY HURLEY

Name

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT to the 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 & Public Hearing - September 8, 2026



Aug 25 2026 7:40 AM

The Westside Community Schools Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 6:00 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 the FY27 Budget. [Click here for a link to the agenda and meeting documents. \(/fs/pages/2727\)](#)

All