



**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Washington County School District**  
**121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah**  
**January 9, 2024**  
**4:30 p.m.**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Amy Mitchell, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Craig Hammer, Executive Director Wade Jensen, and Technology Director Jeremy Cox.*

*Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

**Reverence offered by Board Member Dunn.**

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:03 p.m. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Amy Mitchell, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Craig Hammer, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Property and Personnel Items**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Burke Staheli, and Board Member Nannette Simmons. Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, and Executive HR Director Darin Thomas attended for part of the discussion.*

**Personnel**

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 4:08 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**WORK SESSION**

**Board PLC Training – Wade Jensen**

Wade Jensen shared some of the PLC work happening at Crimson Cliffs High School through a video. On the video, the school administration shared how the teachers are creating a culture of learning for the students. Students are taking ownership for their own learning by reflecting on assessments taken, punch cards for job completions, using former students of the class to help with the current student learning, and

small group practicing and learning. Wade Jensen shared that research shows that student-based learning is a big part of education. It is happening in our District. We have great teachers that are helping students learn to do that and we have great students.

### **Camps and Trips Kickback – Craig Hammer**

Craig Hammer said we don't allow coaches to receive kickbacks anymore. They used to receive a kickback from the universities. Brent Bills said they are not able to do that anymore with the ethics act.

### **2024-2025 Fee Schedule – Brent Bills and Cheri Stevenson**

Brent Bills shared the updated fee schedule. Schools need the fee schedule to start working on their spend plans. Changes this year include a Computer Science language change being added and Drivers Education driving test re-take and additional hours fees were added. Extracurricular fee changes were made to the participation fee amounts, a uniform rental fee for wrestling, camps and trips, and Lacrosse fees. It was recommended to delete boys and girls from sport listings. The foreign student tuition fee was changed to \$9,140.

### **Proposed 2025-2026 Calendar – Cheri Stevenson and Nate Esplin**

Cheri Stevenson shared the proposed calendar options. She mentioned that principals would only want a prep day on the last day of school if all graduations were moved to the same day for all schools. Burke Staheli said the Teacher Prep day could be in February as long as the principals are cognizant of those teachers who have a child graduating and will help them cover for the day. Becky Dunn said she would like the Teacher Prep Day on the graduation day at the end of the year. Craig Seegmiller said he prefers having two days for graduation. Option 2 would start on Friday. Cheri Stevenson mentioned that next year has a prep day on the last day of school. The Board will need to determine what they would like to do.

### **Strategic Plan Update – Cheri Stevenson and Nate Esplin**

This item was not discussed.

### **Boundary Updates – Nate Esplin and Cheri Stevenson**

This item was not discussed.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD**

### **Board Committee Discussions**

There were no Board Committee Discussions.

## **ITEMS FOR BOARD REVIEW**

1. Enrollment
2. Safe Schools
3. GRAMA Requests
4. Department Reports

*A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Washington County School District was held after due, legal, and timely notice being given to all members and interested parties. Board President Becky Dunn called the meeting to order and welcomed all visitors. Board members present were Craig Seegmiller, LaRene Cox, Terry Hutchinson, Burke Staheli, and Nannette Simmons. Board Member David Stirland was excused. Staff members present were Superintendent Richard Holmes and Business Administrator Brent Bills.*

## **OPEN MEETING – 4:30 p.m.**

1. Reverence – Board Member Seegmiller
2. Welcome – Board President Dunn
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Board Member Staheli

## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – LAVERKIN/HURRICANE ELEMENTARY BOUNDARY CHANGE**

**The Washington County School District will hold a Public Hearing on January 9, 2024 at 4:35 p.m. to receive public comments on the proposed elementary boundary change between Hurricane Elementary and LaVerkin Elementary schools. The proposed change would be to move students who reside in Toquerville to LaVerkin Elementary beginning the 2024-25 school year.**

Nate Esplin shared the proposed boundary change for LaVerkin Elementary and Hurricane Elementary. Students in Toquerville would move to LaVerkin Elementary. The students in the Dual Immersion program would have the option to stay at Hurricane Elementary but would need to provide their own transportation.

**Heather Okerlund** said her concerns were addressed. She was concerned about keeping her children in the Dual Immersion program.

**Kaesha Fry** said her concerns were resolved.

## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – CORAL CLIFFS/PARADISE CANYON/RED MOUNTAIN ELEMENTARY BOUNDARY CHANGE**

**Washington County School District will hold a Public Hearing on January 9, 2024 at 4:40 p.m. to receive public comment on the proposed boundary change for Coral Cliffs Elementary students. The Board of Education is considering that Coral Cliffs Elementary be closed and students transferred to Red Mountain and Paradise Canyon Elementary schools beginning the 2024-25 school year. Families that live east of North Dixie Downs Drive would be in the Paradise Canyon boundary, while those living west of North Dixie Downs Drive would be in the Red Mountain boundary.**

Nate Esplin reviewed the proposed boundary changes for Coral Cliffs Elementary, Paradise Canyon Elementary and Red Mountain Elementary. If approved, families in the Coral Cliffs boundary would be moved to Paradise Canyon Elementary or Red Mountain Elementary. Students attending Coral Cliffs Elementary on a boundary waiver would be directed to their original boundary school. If the boundary change is approved, the Post High School program would move into the Coral Cliffs building. The District has looked at other options for Post High and each of those options were not as cost effective. Some questions that have been asked include the afterschool program that is currently at Coral Cliffs Elementary. There are a lot of students who participate in the program. The program is run by the Boys and Girls Club. They are committed to moving that program to Red Mountain Elementary in the proposed boundary change is approved.

**John Sims** has a child at the school. They live close enough that his child is able to walk to school with some of the other neighborhood children. He has asked his child about the school closing as it is no big secret and his child says it down right stinks. He knows that the Board is faced with a very difficult choice. He suggested that sometimes it takes patience in making the right choice. As a father he stands behind his kids, choice of religion, and government. He asked the Board to consider all options. He is looking at other private schooling options for his child if the change is made. He said in the time his child has attended Coral Cliffs Elementary he has seen honor, integrity, respect, and loyalty from the school. The staff at Coral Cliffs is great.

**Shaunna Goldberry** did not address the Board.

**Kathy Willden-Fryer** works as a Crossing Guard, as the PTA Treasurer, and as a room mom. She would like to know when student's needs become a priority. With the changes at the school over the years she has tried to be the constant if the student's lives. She asked the Board to reconsider closing Coral Cliffs Elementary so that parents have that constant for their students. Many of the students need the special assistance and the special gifts that the teachers give to them every single day. She said that Coral Cliffs

is making a positive impact on the community and on the students. She acknowledged and thanked the staff and faculty at Coral Cliffs Elementary who have made an impact on her child's life and on her life. She asked the Board to please think about the children before making a huge decision like this.

**Kyle Fryer** thanked the staff at Coral Cliffs Elementary. He said he wants to be in the military and then a police officer someday. The family believes he can be whatever he wants to be because of Coral Cliffs Elementary. He thanked the staff.

**Kennady McCaul** said there has been a lot of talk about fairness and the cost per pupil. She works with every student on a very individual level at the school. She said we are not just feeding hungry mouths at Coral Cliffs we are feeding hungry minds and hungry souls. She shared examples of success stories from the school and shared how the school recently recognized her own graduation. She mentioned the hours of individualized interactions they have had with the students. She asked the Board to please focus on the cost for people as that money leads back to the kids. If the school is closed, the children will be stuffed into 25 plus classes and inside portables. She said that there should be financial obligation traced back to the kids on that side of town because the demographics of Coral Cliffs don't differ from Red Mountain and Paradise Canyon. These are the kids that need the money. The kids who don't have two parents and the kids who haven't seen someone graduate from college. These are the kids who are hungry over Christmas Break and the kids who have the odds stacked against them. She said these stories should tug at your heartstrings because they are the reality she did not understand until she spent so much time working in a place that focused on improving the quality of education and life of the kids who truly need it the most. She said when we talk about fairness it is clear that the money should be going to Coral Cliffs students. If we want to raise a community to greatness, we don't split the money equally between a school that can raise \$30,00 and a school that needs food bags on the weekends. We use our resources where they are needed, and we all know where they are needed.

**Tiffany Benally** shared a compilation of public responses to some of the new articles about Coral Cliffs. She said the District is getting negative comments from the public with people not happy about the idea of what you are doing to the children at Coral Cliffs. The District should be holding up everything about the school because they have made it a big thing, and this is something others are looking to do. She said the District will be losing students if the school closes. There are people who will be willing to take the students. They are looking at other options because they can't get at other schools what they have at Coral Cliffs. She asked the Board to review the information she emailed and handed out and hopes it will help them make a better decision.

**Jarrett Childers** said his understanding is that all of this movement is for money in order to provide the services that you provide the community. He asked if any of the money would be going to the next school for bullying prevention programs. He said tribalism is a facet of human nature and we are always trying to find the other because that is where the danger lies. He feels that when new kids come to a school, they are immediately the "other." He shared his personal experience moving schools. It was mentioned in a previous meeting that students switched from Red Mountain to Coral Cliffs for the specific purpose of bullying prevention.

**Aubrey Stevens** said she feels like it's pretty obvious that the decision to close Coral Cliffs Elementary will uproot two very vulnerable populations of students. She hopes that the Board will consider more financially reasonable and perhaps less disruptive solutions to the issues that Post High and Coral Cliffs are facing. Previously she had suggested splitting Post High into two cohorts instead of operating a full-size school for a population of students who attend school for four hours a day. It may not be the only solution, but it's one she feels hasn't been explored fully or there are surely other solutions that could be explored. She also suggested that the proposed boundaries could be slightly expanded to continue serving kids who thrive in a smaller school environment. Coral Cliffs has been around for a very long time. She feels it has been a staple in this community for decades. She encouraged the Board to use their votes to hopefully vote in a better proposal. She asked them to wait for a better proposal and ask for more

different options before voting to disrupt both of these schools and discontinue the legacy of Coral Cliffs Elementary.

**Kristen Bringham** said she know this decision is hard for the Board, but she hopes they can look into their hearts. She said parents will tell you over and over how much this means to them to keep the school. Her child also expressed how much Coral Cliffs is loved and how great their teacher is.

**Autumn Galdamez** did not address the Board.

**Rayden Benally** did not address the Board.

**Amanda Amidan** shared a personal struggle this past summer and shared how supportive the staff at Coral Cliffs was. She has had children in the school for 10-years consistently. She welcomed the changes to Coral Cliffs previously and felt it was one of the best things for her children. She has a child who wants to be a teacher now because of the teacher she has not. She said that the school makes sure all their students are taken care of. She has never seen in any other school what she has experienced at Coral Cliffs. She feels it is a treasure box and the District shouldn't lose that treasure. The school needs to stay open.

**Coryell Potter** is a teacher at Coral Cliffs Elementary. She shared about her educational journey which started at Coral Cliffs Elementary. After transferring to another school for a time she decided to go back to Coral Cliffs to make a difference. She mentioned that Principal Eves refers to the staff as the "dream team." She spoke for all the staff at Coral Cliffs who feel they have scored great success because of their determination, their grit, their dedication, their passion, their unity and teamwork. She thanked the Board for keeping her in the game.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **1. Minutes**

- a. December 11, 2023 WCSD Building Authority**
- b. December 11, 2023 Special Meeting of the Board of Education**
- c. December 12, 2023 Meeting of the Board of Education**

### **2. Financial Report**

### **3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items**

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items 1 & 2. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve the LEA Specific Licenses. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

Becky Dunn said it is the recommendation of the Board is to name Kim Monkres as the principal of Crimson Cliffs High School and Adam Baker as the principal of Washington Elementary.

**Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve Kim Monkres as the principal of Crimson Cliffs High School. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve Adam Baker as the principal of Washington Elementary. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

## **WHAT'S RIGHT IN WCSD SCHOOLS**

**Washington Elementary – Principal Kelly Mitchell**

**Sunrise Ridge Intermediate School – Principal Mandie Luce**

The school reports of What's Right in WCSD Schools was postponed.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

No public comments were given.

## **BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

There were no Board Action Items.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

There were no Discussion Items.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

There were no information items.

## **REPORTS**

### **Superintendent**

Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned that CT High has been working with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. There are 375 students that have applied for next year which is an indicator of interest for the school. The school administration has done a great job. Superintendent Richard Holmes reported on the USBA Conference that was recently attended by the Board. He mentioned the involvement of President Becky Dunn in the planning. She also presented at the conference. He reported that Board Member Staheli was nominated and selected to be on the Utah High School Athletic Association Board of Trustees. The District was thrilled to have him selected and grateful to know that we will have great representation on the Board of Trustees.

### **Board**

No reports were given from the Board.

### **Association**

Reece Jacobsen, WCEA, mentioned in his commute he noticed a school marquee noting it was Board Appreciation Month and giving a shout out to their community Board Member. He expressed appreciation for the School Board. He mentioned the legislative session that is about to start. It is a busy time. He did a quick search and found 27 education bills that are currently numbered and about 33 more in the process of numbering. Those numbers are not necessarily all of the bills that affect education. They have a team that will be keeping them informed of what is happening on the hill this year. They hope to be as involved as much as they can from here. UEA and WCEA have their priorities and hope they can partner with the District in the interactions and contacts with legislators. They would like to ask for an 8% increase on the WPU in addition to or above inflation. That would make it somewhere between 8-12%. He mentioned that the Governor has recommended a 5% increase, and they know it could cause some difficulty. Another thing the WCEA is getting behind is a grant to promote paid student teaching opportunities. He feels that is something that we could definitely benefit from. They are modeling it after grants for other professions. He mentioned that he started his teaching career at Coral Cliffs Elementary and knows that the Board has a tough decision to make.

### **PTA/PTO/Community Council**

Kim McKone said schools are now recognizing students for improving their GPAs and are handing out certificates. She also mentioned that White Ribbon Week is coming up and many of the schools are focusing on healthy phone and online habits. A couple of elementary schools are working on Literacy Week and wanting to get more books in the homes of students with the book fairs and trying to help our teachers have more books in their classrooms. Kim McKone said she also sits on the Education Commission at the State School Board. They met and went over the education bills. She mentioned that PTA will be up at the legislative sessions and will be a voice of support. They want the PTA voice to be known and are trying to get with legislators. She said they appreciate the opportunity to serve in the schools and be a support system to the teachers, students, and families in Washington County School District.

**PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 minutes each**

No public comments were given.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:24 p.m. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT**