



**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Washington County School District**  
**121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah**  
**October 10, 2023**  
**4:30 p.m.**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, 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 Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, and Communications Director Steven Dunham.*

*Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

**Reverence offered by Board President Dunn.**

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:06 p.m. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, 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 Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.*

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Property and Personnel Items**

The Closed Session included property and legal items.

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 1:35 p.m. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**WORK SESSION**

**Tech Ridge CDA – St. George City**

Mayor Michelle Randall introduced the Tech Ridge CDA proposal and those attending with her from St. George City. The City Council fully supports the project. They said that the input from Superintendent Holmes and Brent Bills was valuable, and they look forward to the continued partnership. Chad Thomas said the Washington County Strategic Economic Plan includes keeping STEM talent in the area. The development is a 355-acre project and has a 1.1 billion dollar assessed value. It is estimated it will bring 4,765 office jobs with an average wage of \$116,000. The project Includes office, retail, hotel, and residential (1-2 bedroom) units. It will include some mixed-use buildings. The Development Agreement is performance-based and includes residential controls with 2,400 residential unit maximum and the city will not approve a permit that exceeds the ratio of residential for every 1,000 gross square feet of

commercial uses. It also includes a buy-back clause and includes water conservation efforts. The request would modify the originally approved CDA with the original being mostly residential over 20 years. The request would now include an additional 5 years to the residential part through 2040, 26 years (3 tranches commercial through 2056, increased NPV cap to \$50 million (previously \$25 million NPV). Chad Thomas said the project will create high-paying jobs with an average wage of \$116,000. It is anticipated it will bring 6,000 jobs with 4,765 office jobs. It would diversify the economy by creating an ecosystem for tech. It would bring opportunities for local talent with career pathways. The timeline for the CDA includes a request for the School Board to authorize the interlocal agreement on October 23, the RDA to adopt the plan and budget on October 26, and the RDA to adopt the interlocal agreements on November 9. Brent Bills said the NPV does not meet the total needs of the project. The city will have to work with the developer to close the gap for the additional costs. Residential and smaller structures would begin next month. Most of the work now is on the infrastructure. They need to build access up the ridge on the east side. The cost for the infrastructure is \$34M. LaRene Cox asked about the Dixie Tech College involvement to help with infrastructure. When schools are built, we have to pay half of the road and half of the sewer. She feels is should at least be a conversation with them. Burke Staheli said they will benefit from it and asked about local talent. Chad Thomas said it is those who live here or have moved back to the area. There will be many jobs besides the tech coding. It was mentioned that Utah Tech University is supportive as they can see students continuing to work here. Brent Bills said they will be hiring from many of the graduate programs offered at Utah Tech University. That is why we built CT High. It was mentioned that five home grown companies are planning to build up there. The hybrid model is what is working best for employees. Chad Thomas said they are working to build innovative space on Tech Ridge. They want a place where people will want to work, live, and play. The planning also includes putting in 60 acres of green space with parks and walking paths that will bring others to enjoy the space. Burke Staheli mentioned some of the previous CDA plans being changed and said the Board would like to have a voice along the way to bring information back to the Board. City representatives said the development has been reviewed to make sure every entity is protected. They have taken time to make sure the plan is transparent. The council is open to the idea of having a member of the Board on the committee and said they have been thinking about the School District all along the way. David Stirland said it would be good to work closer and have more transparency in working with the municipalities and foster the teamwork. Becky Dunn asked about the size of the apartments. City representatives said the structures cannot go higher than 80 feet. There are additional restrictions as it gets closer to the edge of the ridge. Chad Thomas said after building the first commercial building they will unlock the residential. It will continue throughout the project. It is an aggressive project for the developer.

The Board did a quick site visit to the Technology Department and Post High building. Jeremy Cox took a minute to explain what they saw in the visits. They have filled up all the cubicle space in the Technology building. The break room has been turned into a conference room and the conference room has been turned into offices. They have tried to block time in the break room to allow staff to use it for lunch. They are needing more space.

**Board Member Simmons presented a motion to go into a closed session at 3:16 p.m. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, 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 Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.*

Personnel

**Board Member Stirland presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 4:15 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**Board PLC Training – Wade Jensen**

Postponed training

**Enrollment Updates – Nate Esplin and Cheri Stevenson**

Nate Esplin shared two proposed boundary changes with Coral Cliffs to Paradise Canyon. There would be 62 students involved. The out of boundary students would go back to their boundary school. That would allow more space at Coral Cliffs to move the Post High program. Becky Dunn asked about the students from the Shivwits reservation being bused to Paradise Canyon. She is concerned that the school would need another portable. It would also take students from Red Mountain and would reduce their enrollment. He said if we don't make the move this next year, we could watch enrollment and make the change in the future. He will speak with the staff tomorrow and notify parents next week of a November meeting to explain the proposed changes. The teachers at Coral Cliffs would be taken care of. He said we could move the Utah Tech program to another school.

Nate Esplin also proposed moving 103 Toquerville students to LaVerkin Elementary. There are some Dual Immersion students that would be allowed to stay at Hurricane Elementary or they may be able to have split classes at LaVerkin Elementary for the Dual Immersion students. He mentioned that the state may be able to help with transportation costs. Nate Esplin said that he could meet with parents to see how they are feeling.

Brent Bills shared enrollment numbers. Secondary schools were projected to have 18,364 and have an actual count of 18,373. Elementary schools were projected to have 13,514 and have an actual count of 13,368. We were fairly close overall. Looking at same average growth rate over the past four years. Hurricane Elementary would have the biggest growth in the Hurricane area schools. He also looked at growth rates for just one year. Majestic Fields and Desert Canyons could have problems. That seems to be where most of the growth is going, and the Desert Canyons area would be where the next school is needed. Secondary schools won't see much growth before 2027.

The Board discussed and approved moving the October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting to October 30<sup>th</sup>.

**OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD**

**Board Committee Discussions**

No Board committee reports were given.

**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, David Stirland, LaRene Cox, Burke Staheli, Nannette Simmons, and Terry Hutchinson. Staff members present were Superintendent Richard Holmes, and Business Administrator Brent Bills.*

**OPEN MEETING – 4:30 p.m.**

**Reverence by Member Staheli**

**Welcome – Board President Dunn**

**Pledge of Allegiance by Member Seegmiller**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Minutes

- a. September 12, 2023 Meeting of the Board of Education
- b. September 18, 2023 Special Meeting of the Board of Education
- 2. Financial Report
- 3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items
- 4. Hurricane Middle TSSA Plan Change
- 5. Arrowhead Elementary School LAND Trust Plan Change
- 6. Bloomington Elementary School LAND Trust Plan Change
- 7. Coral Cliffs Elementary TSSA Plan Change
- 8. Desert Canyons Elementary TSSA Plan Change
- 9. Desert Hills High TSSA & School LAND Trust Plan Changes
- 10. Desert Hills Middle School LAND Trust Plan Change
- 11. Heritage Elementary TSSA Plan Change
- 12. Hurricane High TSSA Plan Change

Becky Dunn said she appreciated having the signatures on the School LAND Trust plan changes. Craig Seegmiller asked about the large number of SLT and TSSA changes. Burke Staheli said it is due to the early state deadline date being before they know funding they will receive. Becky Dunn also mentioned it may also be from schools not being able to hire aids planned, so they need to change the plan. Craig Seegmiller mentioned the legislative discussion to give more money to schools. It will require a legislative change. Becky Dunn said they are doing amazing things in the schools with that money. Terry Hutchinson also mentioned that benefits of serving on the Community Council.

**Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

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

### **Red Mountain Elementary – Principal Jennifer Leavitt**

Jennifer Leavitt shared the good things happening at Red Mountain. She expressed appreciation for her wonderful staff. The big three areas are building relationships, clear expectations, meeting needs of all learners. They are working to build relationships with parents and get them in the school. Teachers select one student to recognize and invite parents to come to the school as the students walk down the hall for a high five recognition. They have focused on academics but have also focused on behavior issues. They have developed an MTSS behavior program. Tier 1 uses Second Steps, Tier 2 has a skills room, and Tier 3 meets with a behavior tech. They are seeing great success with that program. They have focused on Tier 1 Language Arts with an emphasis on the Science of Reading and LETRS Training. Currently, there is only one 1<sup>st</sup> grade student who has not passed the skills. They are also piloting Illustrative Math and anxious to see the impact of that program.

### **Fossil Ridge Intermediate School – Principal Jonathan Howell**

Jonathan Howell said there are great things in all the schools but particularly at Fossil Ridge. They have great people in the school. He shared some of the great things the counseling team is doing. The counselors had an idea to create a counseling resource center. It is Tier 2 and Tier 3 support for students and their families. They have used the BLVD Home money to help furnish the room. It is a place to meet with counselors when crisis happens. They have a food pantry and clothing distributions where students can get needed items in a safe place. In September, the food pantry serviced 992 students and families. Fifty students filled donated bags from Harmons to distribute. There are 8 families that received a box of food. Student group counseling also happens in the room to help with attendance, communication, and coping skills. It has been a tremendous asset to students and families. The counseling group is doing what they can to meet the needs of students. Food for the pantry is donated from the Utah Food Bank and Costco.

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

**Justin Caplin**, parent, address the Board to say thank you for making a change to the policy that allows both parents and parent guardians to receive notifications on the library books. He said it is nice to see what his kids are checking out. He just wanted to thank the Board.

## **BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

### **Dixie High Vocational CM/GC RFP – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills said the District is trying something different with large building projects by hiring a CM/GC. An RFP was put out and the committee met to review the submissions. The committee recommendation would be to issue the CM/GC contract for the Dixie High Vocational Building to Hughes General Contractors. The District had great responses, but it came down to funding.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve and award the RFP to Hughes General Contractors. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Snow Canyon Middle School CM/GC RFP – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills said the committee met went through the submissions. Again, he said we had some great responses and some really top-notch companies. It did come down to the points on the cost. The recommendation for the Snow Canyon Middle School remodel would be to select Hughes General Contractors.

**Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve and award the RFP to Hughes General Contractors. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Crack Seal Contract – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills said the bid was put out and split to make it more competitive. The bid is for eight schools. The committee recommendation is to select the lower bid with Holbrook Asphalt.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve and select Holbrook Asphalt for the Crack Seal Contract. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Policy 2961 Language Access Plan – Brad Christensen**

Brad Christensen said that the Policy has had the 30-day review period. The policy comes from the state law requiring that every school district have a Language Access Plan for their parents. No comments were received from the public. The changes submitted from the Board were changed on the updated policy copy received. Brad Christensen said he has looked a little into some neat stuff that's happening with AI which he feels could help. He said we are fortunate in our District because we have some staff members who are native Spanish speakers and have been able to translate many documents and we already have things up on our website in Spanish. He feels we have a pretty good plan going forward.

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve Policy 2961 Language Access Plan. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Policy 4211 Media Center Library Materials – Jeremy Cox**

Jeremy Cox said there were a few minor changes to Policy 4211 since the last Board Meeting. One of the more specific changes helps to clarify that this policy applies to the school library collection. Classroom sets, which is a set of materials that's used in the classroom for instruction, would apply under the Classroom Curriculum Policy rather than this policy. There were additional changes in subsection 4.3 regarding notification to parents and guardians. The new statute basically says that every parent or guardian will have the opportunity to log into power school to see what the checkout history of their child.

**Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve Policy 4211 Media Center Library Materials. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Policy 3700 Technology Acceptable Use Policy – Jeremy Cox**

Jeremy Cox said he has been working on this policy for several months. He has been trying to make sure we covered everything. Our previous policy contained a lot of terminology that was very outdated. It prohibited things that people do every day on a regular basis, such as an employee who connected their phone to the school Wi-Fi and then sent a personal message to their spouse could be violating the policy. There was a lot of stuff in there that just needed to be updated. He said it just shows how technology changes over time. The policy will be put forward for a 30-day review for feedback.

### **Policy 3730 Technology Security Policy – Jeremy Cox**

Jeremy Cox said there are only a couple of minor changes needed to this policy. Subsection 3.5.4 was changed to require approval from the Director of Technology for any changes to the remote access policy. They will be giving a little more latitude to service providers but will also raise the bar on the approval process by having the Director approve remote access rather than the Information Security Officer. The main change to the policy is removing the language associated with Internet content filtering under subsection 3.10. The subsection was replaced to say that Internet content filtering is governed by Policy 3700. This takes care of the state requirements.

### **Policy 1730 Code of Conduct/Appropriate Behavior Policy – Jeremy Cox**

Jeremy Cox said Policy 1730 has been discussed to some length. The spirit of this policy change is to reinforce the concept that schools would not be a place for public forum. They are a place for established curriculum that has been approved and employees shouldn't bring their personal beliefs or personal opinions into that mix as they are placed in a position of trust with minors. Jeremy Cox reported on the proposed changes pursuant to UCA 53G-10-402 where district facilities, classrooms, buses, and other district property are not public forums for display or distribution of political, religious, or personal viewpoints and employees may not use them for the posting or display of materials to promote or convey a political, religious, or personal message. He mentioned that the proposed language for the policy change came from another district and complies with the Utah statute. He said the other change, based on feedback, was to define personal space in subsection 3.1.8. Personal space may be used to keep personal items so long as those items do not become a distraction to the learning environment. Conduct prohibited under this policy is considered a violation of this policy regardless of whether a student may have consented. A small change was also made to 3.1.7 defining student as person enrolled in a public school as not all students enrolled are children. Personal space means on top of a staff member's desk or in inside a desk, cabinet, or drawer or on a staff assigned computer or device, and when applicable in a staff member's office.

### **Policy 4212 Learning Materials – Jeremy Cox**

Jeremy Cox said changes to Policy 4212 are to clarify some of the language. Changes were made to use the same terminology in Policy 4211 with reference to the School Library Collection. Subsection 4.11.1 was changed from learning material selected or supported at the district level will be considered instructional material to learning material selected for districtwide use is considered instructional material. That material is adopted and approved by the School Board in an open meeting in compliance with UCA 53G-4-402. He said it has been narrowed down to learning material selected for districtwide use so they are programs that can be supported. Schools can use a platform program to see if a software they are interested in is compliant before they actually use it. Material that is selected by a school that is not used districtwide would be considered supplemental material under the policy. Terry Hutchinson mentioned that the legislation is proposing more changes that may require additional policy changes.

### **Policy 8000 Special Education Policies and Procedures – Hollee Cullen**

Hollee Cullen said the policy changes are needed with the updated state Special Education rules. She has updated our policy to match the USBE language. She did provide a summary sheet so the changes could be more easily reviewed. Some of the biggest changes include the developmental delay age adjustment and the emotional behavior disability definition and criteria. The policy will be open for the review and comment period.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

There were no information items presented.

## **REPORTS**

### **Superintendent**

Superintendent Richard Holmes reported that Lori Whitehead at Desert Hills High was award by the Utah Association of Secondary Principals as the Secondary School Principals Secretary of the year. He shared his congratulations to her. He also thanked Steven Dunham and his team for the recent Golf

Tournament. It was a great success. He mentioned that many of the District Office staff volunteer at the Golf Tournament to help. They could not do it without all of the help. It is a long day with some arriving very early to help set up things and some even help the night before. He personally thanked the District staff for making that sacrifice and going to help. Superintendent Richard Holmes also reported that three schools were silver star recipients of the UHSAA Sportsmanship recognition – Crimson Cliffs High, Desert Hills High, and Dixie High. He briefly reported on the CT High School Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. He said it was a tremendous success with an incredibly large turnout from community leaders. He thanked those who helped, especially Chris Homer and Brad Bench. He mentioned that they will do a school tour on Thursday for any who want to visit and see the school.

### **Board**

Terry Hutchinson mentioned that Panorama Elementary will be getting strider bikes for students to use.

Craig Seegmiller thanked the Foundation for their work on the Golf Tournament. Several golfers said it is the best tournament they attend.

### **Association**

Reece Jacobsen, WCEA, said the Utah Education Association does provide our members some great opportunities that will be coming up in the next couple months. At the beginning of November will be the annual State Bargaining Summit that's actually a really great opportunity. He said it is open to many of our building leaders and our executive board to attend. They share and educate on how a district operates. Some of the association members even go up and present on their experiences, so it's a good opportunity to learn about budgets, funding, and interest-based bargaining. He said we have benefited from the training here in our District. He also shared about the Educator Day on the Hill. Every year the UEA sponsors teachers to go and address their legislators. It's a powerful opportunity and the Thursday night before they will often bring first timers up to the hill and train them on the best ways to address their legislators. Being down on the opposite end of the state has proposed some challenges for Southern Utah educators to attend such events. Some substitute crises and things like that have made it difficult for us to have our voices heard by our legislators. Those in-person interactions are very powerful. The UEA is adjusting that program and they're offering a Regional Educator Day on the Hill trainings to help our educators develop relationships with legislators. Most of the voices currently come from the Wasatch Front. He said WCEA would like to be able to increase our numbers so in January our local educators can be trained by UEA on the best ways to approach and build relationship with our local legislators. He expressed appreciation for those who represent us down here and advocate for public education. He mentioned that UEA also just announced their legislative platform and shared some of the points. They are going to request a minimum of an 8% increase on the rated pupil unit. They also want to fully fund and increase their paid professional hours of HB 396. They are also advocating for a paid student teaching program and ways that we can really get the best teachers in our classrooms. Sometimes that financial burden of leaving a job to get ready to enter the teaching field is a challenge and we lose people in the profession. Lastly, they want to protect the public education funding guaranteed in the Utah Constitution which is a big discussion right now.

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

Kim McKone shared some of the things that PTA has done to start off the beginning of the year. School PTAs are starting off with fundraisers to raise money for their school. Heritage Elementary has started a Roadrunner Mileage Club that they do on Fridays. They tracked their laps and received points for each round they accomplish and are acknowledged when they have earned a marathon worth of miles. South Mesa elementary had over 100 entries in the Reflections program which is really exciting because that is a PTA program where we get to see the kid's strengths. She mentioned that Career Tech High now is officially a PTA school. Teachers and staff members at the school will receive a small Bundt cake for their birthday. Red Ribbon Week will be happening at the end of the month for all the schools. CT High is doing an essay contest. They are working to recognizing students for their hard work through teacher nominations. Tonaquint Intermediate did a service fundraiser where students did over 900 acts of kindness at school, home, and in the community. They also raised and gathered food for Tans Treats so

the students could get excited about helping the other kids in need. Panorama Elementary has scheduled a Reflections Red Carpet Gala on November 6<sup>th</sup>. Horizon Elementary has kicked off with a bunch of stuff including a fundraiser fun run, Red Ribbon Week, and a book fair dinner. Sunrise Ridge is helping nurses with vision screenings. Enterprise high is doing their second annual Zombie Run with the cross-country track team. It gets the community out involved and that's how they raise money for teacher appreciation. Desert Canyons raised the additional money needed to get their 30,000 for a STEM classroom. They are excited to move forward with that. Crimson Cliffs High is working on student appreciation. Santa Clara Elementary won first place in the parade for their float. They have raised money for a book machine. Kids will receive a token for good behavior and can go and get a book. They want to increase reading. Arrowhead Elementary also did a readathon. Classes with the most reading minutes and best fundraising received a Chick-fil-A party. PTA is helping with SEP dinners for teachers. They are doing a mileage club where students can earn charms to put on a necklace and did a walk to school day with a Beat the Street Assembly for students to learn about bike and walking safety. The Health Department came and did a rodeo obstacle course so the kids could practice what they learned. Paradise Canyon PTA helped fund a field trip. They are also gearing up for their Day of the Dead celebration on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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

**Anna Springer** addressed the Board with concerns about lack of support at her student's school. She was notified that her student would not be receiving the same Special Education services. She said there are multiple children who won't get the support they need. She said that IEPs are a legal obligation to offer equal opportunities for education. If there is not enough staff to provide those legal services, then something needs to be done or changed to provide the staff needed. She is also concerned with the growth in the community that the number of students needing services with grow. She feels that burnout is quickly becoming a problem for Special Education teachers and support staff. She would like to see more support for Special Education teachers and staff so student IEPs will not be neglected and all children, despite their cognitive levels, will receive the education afforded to them under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**