



**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Washington County School District**  
**121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah**  
**September 12, 2023**  
**4:30 p.m.**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member David Stirland, 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 Craig Hammer, 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 Member Cox.**

**WORK SESSION**

**Student Body President Lunch**

*Students attending: Pine View High – Morgan Riley, Water Canyon High – Ru Barlow, Hurricane High – Matthew Thomas, Snow Canyon High – Caden Morris, Crimson Cliffs High – Ben Marsden, Enterprise High – Parker Holt, Millcreek High – Aiden Klas, Dixie High – Evan Wells, Desert Hills High – Cai Klomp, and CT High – Phoenix Nurkalis.*

The students shared some of the things that are awesome at the school or things that could be better. Responses included how students are involved but all students could feel more welcome, a lot of students attend the sporting events but don't show up for other events, school spirit could be better, they have great student council members, having better school spirit and getting students involved, there is good student participation, setting traditions at the school, seeing more students at events, good teachers and assistants, and better participation at events. Evan Wells said he would like to know more about what the Board can help with to help students know they are on the same team. Board President Dunn asked what the Board could do to help the schools. Responses included letting the schools be more competitive with each other. Burke Staheli said the Board can help with upgrades on campus, approving sports, and helping with donations for items. Terry Hutchinson said the Board sets the policies which need to be fair and follow legal requirements. Nannette Simmons said the Board is an advocate for students. LaRene Cox said that principals determine other things related to school spirit. Brent Bills said that the Board also controls the size of schools. Our Board has worked to keep the class sizes smaller which also affects the culture at the school. Burke Staheli said the Board also looks at school boundaries. Morgan Riley said Pine View High needs better Internet connections. Phoenix Nurkalis would like more information on businesses in the area for internships. Becky Dunn mentioned that there are District staff members who are working to help with internships in the District. Brent Bills also mentioned that food trucks have been given permission to come in and provide more lunch options. He said that Utah Tech University will be working on their site and will also provide options for students. Matthew Thomas mentioned that there are parking problems at Hurricane High. Brent Bills mentioned that the District has purchased property for more parking. Cai Klomp said he would like to have a multi-school dance. Several others agreed they would like to see a multi-school dance as well. Superintendent Richard Holmes said principals have

concerns with safety and supervision of a multi-school dances. Darin Thomas said there would not be a school that could house an event that big. The number of students would be a concern. Caden Morris said it would be fun to bring friends together and to make new friends. Burke Staheli suggested that they work as smaller groups to come up with a proposal to give to principals. Evan Wells felt cutting it down to just seniors would be hard as they all have connections with all high school grades. He suggested holding a duo or tri school dance. Superintendent Richard Holmes said it would still be up to the principal to approve. Craig Seegmiller suggested they consider all of the concerns and come up with solutions. Ben Marsden suggested having a celebration dance for just the seniors each year. Younger students could look forward to it for their senior year. David Stirland said that the Board is responsible to look at the risk and safety concerns for students. Principals are the same and look at safety concerns and the risks involved. Burke Staheli and Craig Seegmiller said they should work through the principal first. Becky Dunn asked the students about dress code concerns in the schools. Ben Marsden said it is not working. He said it is not really there or is not being enforced. The students agreed that girls are dress coded more than boys. They also don't feel that student dress is affecting their learning. Evan Wells said it is hard for teachers to have to dress code a student. He feels that teachers avoid it. Craig Seegmiller said that he receives pressure from parents to make sure it is enforced. Ben Marsden said most of the time things don't bother the students, even profanity. He feels that teachers should be able to enforce things in their classroom, but he doesn't know who can really enforce it. Cai Klomp said there is not much that can be done in the hallways. He feels middle school was worse. Evan Wells suggested teaching the students at the beginning of each year that profanity and dress can be done in a better way. Superintendent Richard Holmes asked how all students are included in the school or if there is harassment of students. Phoenix Nurkalis said there are not direct attacks, but some make casual jokes and may take it too far. Ben Marsden said there are issues with students saying racial slurs with friends, but not as an attack to minority. Cai Klomp said some say it in a joking way and don't understand what they are saying. Evan Wells said there are things that the cultures don't understand about each other. Student councils should help to make sure they are all included. Caden Morris said he can see some separation in the students. Morgan Riley said Pine View High has included Spanish captions on their announcements. The students have appreciated the efforts made to include them more. Students feel that some of the racial words are coming from what is heard in music or the media. Students use the words more in joking than to offend racially. Evan Wells said schools need to help the students understand what the word means and how it can be hurtful to others. Phoenix Nurkalis said helping students understand the standard of the school will help it fade.

**Board Member Stirland presented a motion to go into a closed session at 1:18 p.m. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

#### **CLOSED SESSION** **Property and Personnel Items**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member David Stirland, 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 Craig Hammer, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.*

#### **Legal**

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

## **Negotiations and Personnel**

*Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member David Stirland, 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 Craig Hammer, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.*

## **Property**

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 3:53 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

## **WORK SESSION**

### **Board PLC Training – Steve Gregoire**

Steve Gregoire shared a video clip on Collective Commitments and team norms from Legacy Elementary. The video shared how the teams and faculty selected and then reviewed the Collective Commitments. The Collective Commitments help teachers to know how they are doing in the classroom. Teams are able to share ideas and work collaboratively. PLC meetings are more effective, and the PLC time is used better. Steve Gregoire said all of the schools are doing this at the beginning of the year.

### **State Mental Health Screener – Tami Curtis**

Tami Curtis shared that the state will be offering a mental health screener program. We will offer the resources for our parents to use with their child. Our District has chosen to leave this under the parent control. They do not have to share the results with the school.

### **ALP in Intermediate Schools – Cheri Stevenson and Wade Jensen**

The discussion on ALP in intermediate schools was postponed.

### **Foundation Flyers and Advertisements – Steven Dunham**

Steven Dunham said the District has been working on a digital format for sending flyers to parents. Last year the Foundation brought in \$27,000 from flyers which helps with some of the administrative costs. Most of the money they receive is through donations with specifically earmarked purposes. There was some controversy with a recent flyer that went home. Although there are criteria in Policy 3600 that we do follow on what is allowed to be advertised, he suggested including some additional topics that we do not allow to go home on a flyer. The cost to send districtwide is \$1500. Those who are promoting are responsible for printing the flyer. Steven feels we need to adjust to policy to include terminology on what is appropriate for younger children. Becky Dunn said the policy states it must be age appropriate. Steven Dunham said we need to look closer at it from our side. Superintendent Richard Holmes said the Board would need to decide if they no longer want to allow advertising. Steven Dunham said we are still looking to fine tune the electronic advertising. Becky Dunn suggested also looking at how the schools approve PTA flyers under 3.3.3.1. Steven Dunham shared a thank you note receive from one of the grant recipients with the Board.

### **Dress Code Update – Cheri Stevenson**

The discussion on dress code was postponed.

### **Enrollment Update – Cheri Stevenson and Nate Esplin**

The discussion on enrollment updates was postponed.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD**

### **Board Committee Discussions**

Craig Seegmiller and Brent Bills shared that the audit is going well, and the auditors are finishing the report for the committee.

David Stirland mentioned classroom grants. The Foundation Board would like to also do some super grants. The Foundation Golf Tournament scheduled on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> at The Ledges. They are projected to bring in \$110,000 dollars at the event. He encouraged the board members to attend.

LaRene Cox reported on legislation. She said we do not have a Southern Utah representative on the Education Interim Committee. We need representation from here and she is concerned. She is trying to keep an eye on what they are doing and will share any concerns she sees.

Terry Hutchinson briefly reported on attending the USBA meeting to set the legislative agenda. They did talk about the state surplus and why it happened. He feels it would help to have Board members more involved with the legislators. We have a different legislative group than we have had in the past and he suggested we need to build better relationships with them and encourage the process.

Burke Staheli talked about meeting that happened after the monument expansion. Some of the other counties are being hit harder by the laws and that was the main discussion there. Zion National Park is deterring people from coming with their survey. Their goal seems to be to limit the business. Right now, the meetings are mostly on environmental items.

Nannette Simmons said Dixie Tech meets on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Representatives for Tech Ridge have contacted her to meet about the CDA.

Becky Dunn said the USBA Leadership Academy was great. Richard Holmes thanked Becky Dunn for role in the meeting planning. It was a great meeting. Brent Bills and Steve Dunham presented on the tax plan, and it was well received. The Regional Meeting is scheduled for September 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in Cedar City. Becky Dunn asked the Board to think about attending NSBA.

The Board changed the September 25<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting to September 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **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.**

1. Reverence by Member Hutchinson
2. Welcome – Board President Dunn
3. Pledge of Allegiance by Member Stirland
4. Employee Recognitions
5. Certiport Industry Exam Presentation – Dave Gardner

Kim Monkres reported that Justin Redfearn was recognized as the US Track and Field Coach of the Year. She said that he is a champion for all athletes.

Kim Monkres also recognized Kyle Campbell who was named the Utah Assistant Principal of the Year and was one of the top candidates for the National Assistant Principal of the Year. He was able to present at the UASSP conference. He has done a phenomenal job of encouraging students.

Nate Esplin recognized Melody Thieme for her state and national Agriculture in the Classroom Award. Melody shared that 4<sup>th</sup> grade students get to grow the native plants from Utah and dye fabrics with the plants. The students also have greenhouse jobs to help take care of the greenhouse plants at Crimson View Elementary.

Dave Gardner and Certiport representatives Mike Maddock, Sara Cox, and Brent Clark recognized students in Washington County School District who were some of the top certification earners. The certification is mainly around the Microsoft and Adobe programs. Utah really hits it out of the park and Washington County has 25% of the certification. Students receiving the top honor were Cayman Conley, Ellie Preston, Harlee Lee-Sorrell, Luikart Brady, Michael Callahan, Barlow Ginger, and Logan Dobson. They also recognized the teachers of those students which included Derek Smith, Jaime Araiza, Rodney Tracy, Heidi Taylor, and Brett Moss.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1. Minutes**
  - a. August 8, 2023**
- 2. Financial Report**
- 3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items**
- 4. UHSAA 150-Mile Travel Forms**
- 5. Out of Country Travel Request**
- 6. Horizon Elementary School LAND Trust Plan Change**
- 7. Lava Ridge Intermediate TSSA Plan Change**
- 8. Hurricane Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 9. Hurricane Intermediate TSSA Plan Change**
- 10. Heritage Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 11. LaVerkin Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 12. Fossil Ridge Intermediate TSSA Plan Change**
- 13. Hurricane High School TSSA Plan Change**
- 14. Bloomington Hills Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 15. South Mesa Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 16. Riverside Elementary School LAND Trust Plan Change**

Terry Hutchinson said Bloomington Hills did not list what the paraprofessionals are being hired for. Nate Esplin said they are reading paraprofessionals. He mentioned that sometimes they are a little vague so they can help where needed at the school. Becky Dunn mentioned that the schools that listed both SLT and TSSA in their letter are only changing their TSSA plan. Craig Seegmiller said the state is trying to do a constitutional amendment to release more money from Trust Lands for the benefit of current students.

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

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

### **Little Valley Elementary – Principal Paul Orchard**

Principal Paul Orchard shared what is right at Little Valley Elementary. He shared RISE testing results showing Little Valley with higher scores than the state average. Little Valley was 57% in Language Arts, 59% in Math and 64% in Science. Culture and relationships have been a focus at the school. They are working to develop good relationships with students, parents, and the community. This year they are focusing on reading. They have developed a plan to work with the lower performing students as well as keeping the other students growing. He shared how teachers are discussing students individually to see what they need to advance. The school has a life skills class. Paras help in the life skills classroom with those students' needing services. The life skills teacher and paras do an awesome job taking care of students.

## **Pine View Middle School – Principal Brett Gifford**

Principal Brett Gifford and Assistant Principal Bo Iverson shared what is right at Pine View Middle. They have been working on the culture at the school. They are committed to safety, connection, and growth. Bo Iverson shared some of the panther pride and PTA recognitions. He shared about the Panther Award nights and schoolwide activities. They are intentional about values being an essential standard at the school, so students know how the values affect every aspect of life. Brett Gifford also shared some of the data on how students felt. Students expressed that relationships were an area they wanted to increase the most. They shared photos from their battle of the classes event.

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

No public comments were given on Board Action items.

## **BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

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

Jeremy Cox suggested that the policy change be tabled until next month.

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

### **Policy 4800 Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration Policy – Cheri Stevenson**

Cheri Stevenson said no public comment was received. The of the policy states that once the student starts the eighth grade, they cannot accept a full grade acceleration as they start earning graduation credits. Students in those grades can take other more advanced courses.

**Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve Policy 4800 Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration Policy with the change to add 3.4.5. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Early Interactive Reading Software Program RFP – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills said we have a requirement for curriculum adoption to be on review prior to approving. The state has stopped supporting the software programs and is no longer doing RFPs. We now do our own. There were four software programs selected from the RFP including Lexia, Waterford, Imagine Learning, i-ready for the different grade levels. Kathy Hall said students get software fatigue year after year. This helps give the schools and students choices. Not one program meets the needs of all schools. The state still helps fund the cost, but the District has to do the legwork for the RFP. Kathy Hall said data show that students are making great progress and are doing well. Students are required to be on the program for 20-minutes a day. The software is specifically for grades K-3. There is flexibility to choose what we would like to use. If approved, she will meet with the executive leaders to determine how it will be used in the schools.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Early Interactive Reading Software Program RFP with the selection of Lexia, Waterford, Imagine Learning, and i-ready. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

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

Brad Christensen said this new policy is based on legislation and will help us comply with law. The District will need to consult each year to make sure the plan is working. He shared a PowerPoint on the proposed requirements of the Language Access Plan. It also shared the interpretation services schools will need to provide. He mentioned that we are waiting for guidance from the state before implementing parts of the policy. Anything we are doing that parents need to understand will need interpretation. Terry Hutchinson asked about all major documents being available in two languages. He asked if funding would be available. Burke Staheli said we are ahead of this in our schools and have many documents translated. Brad Christensen said there will be other translations of things that are needed such as report card. We want to make sure our parents know what is happening. We have been doing it as a best practice and will need to be more intentional. It was mentioned that under #2, it doesn't define the Language Access Coordinator as districtwide or school level. Brad Christensen will get some

clarification. Becky Dunn asked about optout options and timeframes to provide the information. Brad Christensen said he is hoping the state will provide some translation services.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

No information items were presented.

## **REPORTS**

### **Superintendent**

Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned the recent School Board Leadership training. Board President Dunn helped put the training together. He recognized the board for their work and their continued effort to attend trainings. Superintendent Richard Holmes also recognized the outstanding employees in WCSD. He said we have one of our South Mesa teachers and Kathy Hall presenting to the Legislative Education Interim Committee. South Mesa Elementary is the number one school for LETERS on their reading benchmark.

### **Board**

No reports were given.

### **Association**

Reece Jacobsen, WCEA, said the LETERS training is being great. He mentioned meeting with the District administration to share some of the things that teachers are experiencing. He said there was a lot of effective communications. He said the District has been very responsive and supportive. He shared what teachers are feeling so far this year with the Board. Some Life Skills teachers feel the caseload is high, some are concerned with classroom space eliminating take-home library space, and some feel more support services are needed for teachers. He also shared concerns about Facebook posts that are slandering teachers and state board members calling names. He wanted the Board to know that teachers are working the best they can in the circumstances they have. He invited the Board to come and visit the schools. He said that teachers need cheerleaders.

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

Kim McKone invited two PTA schools to come and share what they are doing.

Lauren Murray, Paradise Canyon PTA, thanked the Board for helping with the playground issue. The kids have been overjoyed to have the playground repaired. Parents feel heard and supported. She said they are 80% Spanish speaking in the home. PTA is focusing on a culture club this year. Kids are learning different dances from around the world and having dinners. They have scheduled an event to celebrate Day of the Dead. She shared that connections and attachments to adults have an effect on education and behavior. They are working to provide opportunities for connections with parents. She shared some of the events they are doing this year including The Nutcracker and a Christmas Store for kids to come and buy presents for family members. She is grateful for the principal and teachers at Paradise Canyon.

Anna Shakespear and Kenni Blake, Desert Canyons PTA, said they increased from 20 to 100 members this year. Their goal has been to push school spirit. They have been fundraising to become a STEM certified school this year. Their goal is to become a platinum school. They would like to have a STEM classroom where teachers would be able to schedule to use the classroom. They are working to raise \$30,000 for the classroom. To become certified, it is more about the things they are doing in the school. They have raised \$19,000 and hope to raise another \$15,000. Kona Ice is a sponsor and purchased 3-D printers for the school. Kids can buy snow cones at lunch with a portion going back to the school as a fundraiser. They are doing an obstacle course fun run. The PTA also does Teacher Appreciation, Dad Squad for dads to eat lunch with kids and stay for an activity, a Grown Up and Goodies event, helps with special needs services, Spirit Fridays, and is hoping next year to give all students a free shirt. The school is keeping the same shirt for two years to help keep costs down. They have an amazing principal and teachers they are working to support.

Burke Staheli mentioned that having a voice on the community council can help do things at the school.

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

**Devin Snow** addressed the Board on the ALP program at Riverside Elementary. He has been thinking about the transition as they grow from the program and would like it to expand to the intermediate schools.

**Greg Friehofner** addressed the Board on Lacrosse. He shared about the impact for students who have been involved in Lacrosse. The students will never be able to have a state championship ring or letter in the sport. The program is functioning here in our area. There are 100s of athletes playing the sport. He feels that the District can figure it out to make the program work in the schools. He would like to provide the opportunity for students to compete.

**Shannon Anderson** addressed the Board on breastfeeding in the schools. She would like the Board to reconsider its stance on breastfeeding. She would like the policy changed. She worries about how she will feed her child if he is hungry while at school with her student. She feels that a breastfeeding mother should not be excluded. She said breastfeeding is a protected right.

**Erika Hodes** shared that a lot of costs are going out to send teachers for training. She is concerned with ESGI program purchase in Hurricane. She said some schools are using TSSA budget to pay for paras and feels that is great. She said that Pine View High School just acquired books and there are many that are questionable. She addressed the Board on Policy 2115 related to gender identity.

**Rebecca Hughes** addressed the Board on ALP at Riverside Elementary. It has been a great program. She is concerned about what will happen next and would like it to bridge to high school. She would like to help to have the program continue in the intermediate school.

**Board President Becky Dunn adjourned the meeting at 6:14 p.m. as there was no further business to discuss.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**