December 17 , 2024 - Wasatch County School District Board of Education Meeting (Tuesday, December 17, 2024)

Generated by Kirsta Alberts on Friday, December 20, 2024

Members present

Board President, Tyler Bluth
Board Vice President, Kim Dickerson
Board Member, Marianne B. Allen
Board Member, Tom Hansen
Board Member, Cory Holmes

Superintendent, Paul Sweat
Business Administrator, Dr. Jason Watt

A. Executive Session - 4:00 p.m.

Discussion, Information: 1. Section 52-4-5 of the Open Meetings Act identifies the topics that may be discussed in a closed meeting. Discussion to purchase, exchange or lease of real property; character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual; pending or reasonably imminent litigation; and or collective bargaining.

B. Study Session - 5:00 p.m.

Discussion, Information: 1. Guest Presenters - Julie Jackson, Helen Price & Tom Holly of Varsity Brands

Superintendent Paul Sweat *spoke about moving forward with the naming and mascot selection process for the new high school. He highlighted the thorough discussions that have taken place over recent months. During his remarks, he introduced Justin Kelly as the new principal of the upcoming high school and Ryan Bishop as the new principal of Wasatch High School, commending their experience and quality as leaders. He acknowledged their contributions and emphasized the district's fortune in having such qualified individuals for these roles. Superintendent Sweat also welcomed representatives from BSN and Varsity Sports, noting their expertise in branding new schools, including selecting names, mascots, and colors. He praised their work and mentioned that they were invited to assist with this process after board approval. The representatives were tasked with presenting ideas around three names that have emerged as leading options through the board's deliberations.*

Varsity Brands, represented by Julie Jackson, Helen Price, and others*, presented their expertise in school branding and identity creation, specifically for new schools or those requiring rebranding. They have assisted over 400 schools nationwide, focusing on creating cohesive, meaningful, and visually appealing school brands to elevate the student experience.*

Key Highlights:

1. ***Experience & Mission:***
    - *Varsity Brands, through its divisions like VIP Branding and BSN Sports, specializes in creating unique school identities, from mascots to logos, uniforms, and facility branding.*
    - *Their mission is to "elevate the student experience" by creating strong, consistent branding that fosters school pride and community engagement.*
2. ***Collaboration Process:***
    - *They collaborate with schools to create a brand identity that aligns with the community's values and vision.*
    - *Deliverables include mascot design, logos, slogans, a brand guide for consistency, and a secure brand locker for file storage.*

Three Options Presented:

1. Iron Horse High School

- ***Why "Iron Horse"?***
  Refers to the steam locomotive, which represents local historical significance, resilience, strength, and progress. It evokes pride and identity for students and the community.
- ***Colors:*** *Steel Blue, Silver Mine, and White Smoke, reflecting the "iron" theme.*
- ***Mascot/Representation:*** *Thunder, symbolizing power, attention, and determination—qualities shared with locomotives.*
- ***Visual Design:***
    - *Strong, angled fonts mimicking a locomotive.*
    - *Subtle references to local landmarks like Mount Timpanogos.*
    - *Creative elements, like a smokestack integrated into the design.*
- ***Slogans:***
    1. *"Iron Sharpens Iron" - Fostering collaboration and growth.*
    2. *"Full Steam Ahead" - Commitment to progress and resolve.*
    3. *"Feel the Power, Hear the Roar" - Unwavering confidence and strength.*

2. Deer Creek High School

- ***Why "Deer Creek"?***
  References the Deer Creek Reservoir, which provides water and power to the community. The name connects to the region's natural beauty and legacy, offering continuity and pride for students and alumni.
- ***Colors:*** *Lake Blue, Silver Mine, and Glacier White.*
- ***Mascot/Representation:*** *River Hawks, symbolizing strength, adaptability, and resilience. These birds always return to their home waters, creating a metaphor for students' connection to their alma mater.*
- ***Visual Design:***
  - *Elements like Mount Timpanogos and the Deer Creek Dam.*
  - *A River Hawk logo integrated into various branding elements.*
- ***Slogans:***
  1. *"Power the World" - Highlighting the reservoir's energy and influence.*
  2. *"Empowering Minds. Energizing the Future" - Connecting education to transformation.*
  3. *"Where Knowledge Powers the Future" - Celebrating education's role in shaping the world.*

3. North Fields High School

- ***Why "North Fields"?***
  Reflects the open fields and pastures where the school is being built. The name symbolizes growth, leadership, and a central community hub. It metaphorically conveys an environment of learning and cultivating potential.
- ***Colors:*** *Mineral Blue, Silver Lake, and Cloud White.*
- ***Mascot/Representation:*** *River Hawks, with a similar design as Deer Creek but showcasing branding elements like "NF" to emphasize the school name.*
- ***Slogans:***
  1. *"Where Growth Meets Excellence" - Highlighting personal development and high standards.*
  2. *"Soaring with Purpose" - Striving for success with meaningful goals.*
  3. *"A Field of Possibilities. A Future of Excellence" - Representing opportunity and achievement.*

Recommendation:
*The marketing team recommended **Iron Horse High School** as the strongest option due to its unique historical significance, symbolic values, and unifying branding potential. The Board of Education then made a decision to adopt Iron Horse High School: Home of the Thunder as the name for the new high school under construction.*

Discussion, Information: 2. Policy Review: Employee Bullying Policy - Dr. Eric Campbell, Director of Student Support
Tabled due to time

Discussion, Information: 3. Policy Review: Ethical Conduct Policy - Dr. Eric Campbell, Director of Student Support
Tabled due to time

C. Board of Education Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance led by Board Vice President Kimberly Dickerson

2. Board Member Roll Call
Members present
Board President, Tyler Bluth
Board Vice President, Kim Dickerson
Board Member, Marianne B. Allen
Board Member, Tom Hansen
Board Member, Cory Holmes

Superintendent, Paul Sweat
Business Administrator, Dr. Jason Watt

D. Information/Celebrations
The Board recognized Rocky Mountain Middle School 7th Grader, Axel Stratford, for having his artwork featured on this year's WCSD Christmas Card.

E. Community Comment

Discussion, Information: 1. Public comments will be accepted for approximately twenty (20) minutes. Each

speaker will be allowed a maximum of two (2) minutes.
Justin Bowen*, a Wasatch parent, voiced concerns about the May 29 graduation date, which is later than in previous years and disrupts plans for families, including a senior trip. He suggested reconsidering the date and possibly starting a petition, noting broad parent and student support for an earlier schedule.*
The board acknowledged his email, stated the later date has its reasons, and welcomed further feedback via email or a meeting with the superintendent. They indicated they would consider a petition but made no promises about changing the date. Superintendent Sweat explained that changing the graduation date now would be difficult due to announced plans, travel arrangements, and logistical constraints. The decision to move the date later was driven by facility scheduling challenges, conflicts with spring sports, and the desire to avoid disrupting underclass academics and activities. While the date is not entirely set in stone, altering it would be highly challenging at this stage.

Jena Horrocks *and* ***Machele Crystal****, representing the Wasatch Education Association, expressed gratitude for the district's support, including the Christmas bonuses for all staff. They thanked outgoing board members Allen and Hansen for their dedication and efforts, highlighting the improved relationship between the association and the school board. They also presented holiday gift cards from local businesses to board members and district administrators, emphasizing their appreciation and growing teacher membership.*

Former Business Administrator Keith Johansen *thanked the board, particularly outgoing members Allen and Hansen, for their dedication to students. He highlighted Tom's ambitious leadership in setting and achieving goals, including building a new high school, improving teacher and staff pay to top levels in the state, and prioritizing student achievement. Johansen praised these efforts for significantly enhancing teacher morale and leaving a lasting legacy of progress for the district.*

Shawn Kelly, Director of HR and Operations*, thanked outgoing board members Hansen and Allen for their service, highlighting key achievements during their tenure: significant salary increases, maintaining in-person learning during COVID-19 despite challenges, and enhancing safety with police officers in every building. He expressed appreciation for their dedication and resilience and acknowledged the lasting impact of their work on public education.*

F. Consent Items

Action (Consent): 1. Consideration of Consent Items
Resolution: Consideration and Approval of Consent Items
Consideration and Approval of Consent Items
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson
Action (Consent), Minutes: 2. School Board Meeting Minutes - November 19, 2024
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson
Minutes: 3. School Board Meeting Minutes - November 10, 2024
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson
Action (Consent): 4. Homeschool Affidavits
Resolution: Approval of Homeschool Affidavits
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson
Action (Consent): 5. Change Order
Dr. Jason Watt updated the board on a change order for the new high school, noting the project is $2.8 million under budget and on schedule. State funding for public roads freed resources to enhance the project, and cost savings with contractor Westland allowed re-adding previously removed items without exceeding original bid amounts. He highlighted Westland's collaboration and cost-effective improvements.
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson
Action (Consent): 6. Financials
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson
Action (Consent): 7. Employee New Hires
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson

Action (Consent): 8. Employee Separations
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson
Action (Consent): 9. Staff or Student Travel
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson

G. Action Items

Action: 1. Consideration to Approve the 2024 Audit Report - Dr. Jason Watt, Business Administrator
Paul Skeen from Eide Bailly *summarized the findings of the school district's financial audit, highlighting a clean and uneventful outcome:*

- *The audit process began in July and involved extensive testing and reviews, concluding with a* ***clean opinion*** *on the financial statements, confirming their accuracy and compliance.*
- *No* ***material weaknesses****,* ***significant deficiencies****, or* ***misstatements*** *(corrected or uncorrected) were identified.*
- *Reports on* ***internal controls and compliance****,* ***federal program expenditures****, and* ***state compliance*** *all showed no findings.*
- *The audit was cooperative and efficient, reflecting a strong internal financial management system.*

Skeen emphasized that a "boring" audit is ideal and thanked the district's team for their collaboration.
Recommendation to approve the 2024 Audit Report as presented by Eide Bailly.
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Cory Holmes.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson

Action: 2. Consideration of Approval of Navigate360 Proposal for CSTAG Training - Dr. Eric Campbell, Director of Student Support
Facilities Coordinator Zach Bredsguard *presented a proposal from Navigate360 for Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) training, as required by HB84. The district has already purchased Level 1 training, and this proposal includes training three staff members to become trainers who will then train over 30 additional team members. Bredsguard requested the board approve the $9,000 quote for the training.*
Approval of Navigate360 Proposal for CSTAG Training; Cost $9,000.00
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Marianne B Allen.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson

Action, Information: 3. Consideration of Employee Bullying Policy - Dr. Eric Campbell, Director of Student Support
Board Member Dickerson proposed tabling the consideration of the employee bullying policy and the ethical conduct policy until the next meeting, as these items were not reviewed during the study session. A motion was made to postpone the discussion to the following month.
Motion to Table Item
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Marianne B Allen.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson

Action, Information: 4. Consideration of the Ethical Conduct Policy - Dr. Eric Campbell, Director of Student Support
Board Member Dickerson proposed tabling the consideration of the employee bullying policy and the ethical conduct policy until the next meeting, as these items were not reviewed during the study session. A motion was made to postpone the discussion to the following month.
Motion to Table Item
Motion by Kimberly Dickerson, second by Marianne B Allen.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson

Action: 5. Consideration to Approve the Purchase of Real Property - Superintendent Sweat
A proposal was presented by ***Superintendent Sweat*** *to address overcrowding and other issues at Midway Elementary School by purchasing land for a future new school. The current school has eight portable classrooms and ongoing maintenance challenges, which are not sustainable long-term. The proposal is to purchase 12 acres of land south of the current school across Mitchie Lane from the LDS Church for $4,740,000, ensuring the district is prepared to build a new elementary school when needed.*

Board Member Holmes *expressed satisfaction with the progress on purchasing land for a new Midway Elementary School, noting that discussions began seven years ago but were delayed for a time. Holmes emphasized that securing this specific piece of land, which had been a challenging process, is a significant accomplishment and an important step for the district's future.*

Board Member Hansen *expressed gratitude to the superintendent for his efforts in securing the land for a new Midway Elementary School, fulfilling a long-term district goal. Mr. Hansen acknowledged disappointment over the 2019 bond failure, which included funding for this elementary school and a second high school, leaving the plan uncertain. He celebrated the resolution of the issue, emphasizing that the new school will greatly benefit Midway's children and the surrounding areas for years to come, calling it a significant achievement for the district.*
Recommendation to approve the property purchase.
Motion by Cory Holmes, second by Tyler Bluth.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson

H. Board Report

Information: 1. Utah State School Board Association
Board Member Allen *reflected on her concluding term, highlighting updates from the USBA, including strong attendance at the New Board Member Workshop, the upcoming January conference, and the success of the Master Board Certification program involving all 41 Utah districts. She acknowledged the end of her roles with USBA and USBE, noted new state board leadership, and announced her term as Region 4 representative will conclude after the January conference. Mrs. Allen expressed gratitude for her experience and will attend one final board meeting and legislative committee meeting.*

I. Superintendent Report

Information: 1. Graduation Date
Superintendent Sweat confirmed that Wasatch High School's graduation will take place on May 29th at the football stadium. He also provided an update on Utah High School Activities Association's upcoming realignment, noting that Wasatch High will remain in the 5A division for the first year of the new alignment following a successful petition. After the new Iron Horse High School opens, both schools are projected to compete in the 4A classification due to a 40% enrollment reduction, as outlined in UHSAA bylaws. Future regions may include Park City and Uintah.

Superintendent Sweat *also introduced Justin Kelly as the principal of the new Iron Horse High School, emphasizing his extensive experience, including four years as principal of Wasatch High School. He highlighted Mr. Kelly's preparedness for this new role and his immediate responsibilities, including overseeing final preparations for the school's opening, such as furniture, equipment, and staffing. He acknowledged the significant work ahead for Mr. Kelly in building a strong team and ensuring the school is ready to operate smoothly once construction is complete. The Superintendent invited Mr. Kelly to share his thoughts with the board and community.*

Mr. Kelly *expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead Iron Horse High School and acknowledged the trust placed in him. He emphasized his commitment to building a strong team of educators and staff, creating a positive culture for students, and ensuring the school's readiness for a successful opening. Mr. Kelly recognized the significant work ahead and expressed enthusiasm for collaborating with the district and community to achieve these goals.*

Board Member Hansen *expressed deep gratitude for Mr. Kelly's service over the past four years and praised his leadership qualities. He emphasized that Mr. Kelly's career and decision-making have prepared him for this role, describing him as the right person for the job, and assured Mr. Kelly of the board's full support, both publicly and privately, and expressed confidence in his future success at Iron Horse High School.*

Superintendent Sweat *introduced Ryan Bishop as the new principal of Wasatch High School, highlighting his deep ties to the community and impressive experience. Mr. Bishop grew up in Cedar City but has roots in Heber City, where his father, a legendary coach, made a lasting impact on the local and state level. Mr. Bishop has worked in two school districts, spending the past eight years as an assistant principal at Wasatch High, overseeing activities and contributing to student achievement. Superintendent Sweat praised Mr. Bishop's leadership qualities, emphasizing his ability to connect with students, staff, and the community. He expressed confidence in Mr. Bishop's capacity to maintain Wasatch High's strong reputation and ensure it remains a desirable and thriving school. Superintendent Sweat lauded the district's fortune in having two exceptional leaders—Mr. Bishop and Mr. Kelly—step into pivotal roles during this critical time. He then invited Mr. Bishop to share his thoughts.*

Mr. Bishop *expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead Wasatch High School and acknowledged outgoing board members Allen and Hansen for their leadership and impact. He reflected on his 28-year career in education, emphasizing that his time at Wasatch High has been the pinnacle, largely due to the mentorship of former principals Tod Johnson and Justin Kelly. Mr. Bishop highlighted his strong working relationship with Mr. Kelly and his excitement for the* *upcoming school separation, framing it as a positive step for the district. He expressed enthusiasm about collaborating with Mr. Kelly during this transition, embracing the friendly rivalry between the two high schools. Mr. Bishop concluded with appreciation for the opportunity and affirmed his commitment to maintaining Wasatch High's legacy while embracing the changes ahead.*

Board members then expressed gratitude and admiration for Mr. Kelly and Mr. Bishop, highlighting their positive impact on students, strong leadership, and collaborative approach. They praised their ability to unify the two schools and offered advice on making and standing by tough decisions. The board voiced full confidence in their ability to lead successfully and thanked them for their dedication.

Prior to adjournment, the Board presented outgoing Board Members Allen and Hansen with plaques commemorating their service.

J. Adjournment

Action, Procedural: 1. Adjourn the meeting for a dinner social then continue the executive session.
Motion by Tyler Bluth, second by Kimberly Dickerson.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Cory Holmes, Tom Hansen, Tyler Bluth, Marianne B Allen, Kimberly Dickerson