



MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah
June 9, 2025
4:30 p.m.

Present: Board President David Stirland, Board Vice President LaRene Cox, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Ron Wade, Board Member Heidi Gunn, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, and Communications Director Steven Dunham.

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence offered by Superintendent Richard Holmes.

Board Member Simmons presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:11 p.m. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

1. Property and Personnel Items

Present: Board President David Stirland, Board Vice President LaRene Cox, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Ron Wade, Board Member Heidi Gunn, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.

Legal, property, audit report, and personnel items were discussed.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 3:50 p.m. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Brent Bills recognized the staff members who were a big part of the new time system implementation including Amy Booth, Crystal Gorley, Misti Boulard, Chad Schmalz, Amanda Amaya, and Tennille Mills.

WORK SESSION

Foundation Report – Steven Dunham

Steven Dunham shared a report of the Foundation. He said over \$390,000 was given and 660 grants were awarded to teachers this past year. Most of the grant money was used for literacy and books. We have some of the best literacy scores in the state. The Foundation is spending more helping teachers in the processes they are trying to teach and expand to help the kids become better readers. He shared the number of grants awarded per school. Some of the principals really promote the grants at their school. He shared some of the thank you notes received from the principals that share how the grants are helping in their school. They recognize that if it wasn't for the grants the teachers would be spending their own money. Steven Dunham explained that the Foundation has funds donated directly to the Foundation

which is used for the grants and funds donated for specific school projects. The Foundation receives about \$500,000 a year to give out for the grants. He reported on the growth over the past several years. The Foundation went from giving about \$70,000 in the first couple of years to over \$390,000 this past year. About 1/3 of our teachers received grants this year. Teachers can apply for grants up to \$500. He said businesses can donate just a few hundred dollars to help a classroom. He said they are pushing in the community to be involved in making a difference in a classroom for just a few hundred bucks. Steven Dunham reported on the donations for the counselor closet and teen centers. Right now, the program is self-sufficient. There are consistent business donors who donate for the counselor closet. They also have about \$100,000 reserve if some of the items run out before donations are received. He said they also work with Walmart to get clearance items needed. Steven Dunham said the Dixie Power Kite Festival brought in \$100,000 this year. That event has also grown. Dixie Power has been doing this for 26 years. They have their employees volunteer their time to help with the event. Over time, they have given over \$2,000,000 in money and time. It is held the first weekend in April. There are about 30,000 who attend the event. The Foundation sells a ton of books. The Golf Tournament is planned for the last Friday in September. They have a new title sponsor this year, McMullin Injury Law, who has given \$15,000 this year. Steven Dunham also shared the help given by Vasu Mudliar and his contribution to the golf tournament, reading in the schools, and the Foundation.

Internship Program Report - Mike Hassler

Mike Hassler shared about the District's Career Development Program. The program helps students with internships, apprenticeships, and job connections. When he started in Washington County School District, the district's program was ranked 41st in the state but become #1 in the state for incentivization over that year. In 2019, the state came down and said if the district could show what we were doing and that it was not fabricated they would start funding internship programs in every district in Utah based off of what we were doing in Washington County. Mike's passion has always been to help pay it forward. He shared some of the struggles he experienced with homelessness as a teenager. He had two teachers who helped him out. Coming to work in the district felt like a chance to repay that debt. Having the state fund the course for the first time was a big deal. In 2020 they officially started funding the program. In 2021 we became one of the top programs in the nation for what we do for Work-based Learning. The program has had a lot of student impact. In April alone, 47 students were able to get first time jobs or higher paying jobs or negotiated pay increases. Last month, the Washington County School District program was recognized as #1 in Utah for the quality of what we are doing. The state has been tracking the quality of our data and our outcomes with students. Washington County is leading in the state, and it is phenomenal what we are doing. We have increased the employer engagement which is now over 5200%. Our economic impact is just over \$15,000,000 in just the last six years. He feels if we were to start studying the economic impact more in Utah when it comes to education like schools outside of Utah do to justify the taxpayer money by showcasing the economic impact, Career Tech would pay itself back alone in less than four years. The program is making a huge difference. Mike Hassler shared a story of one of his student's getting into the medical program. We are making an impact. There is no other district in Utah who has had more success with less in terms of financial commitment. Other districts have spent more with less success in their programs including quality. He said it is about how to think differently to make more things happen. He said he tries to be responsible with what we do and with the budget and it has created more leadership opportunities for students. He loves what he is doing and hopes the program is making the Board proud. The community is feeling it, and the employers are going through the roof. The economic impact is a testament that the program the Board is supporting is the right thing.

Enrollment Update – Superintendent Richard Holmes

The enrollment update was postponed.

Report on Public Relations – Steven Dunham

The report on public relations was postponed.

June 23rd and July 14th Meeting – Superintendent Richard Holmes

A quick meeting is needed on June 23rd to approve the budget. The Board would like to schedule for 8:00 a.m. The meeting on July 14th will be held at Water Canyon High School. The Board would like to schedule for 10:00 a.m. and meet at the District Office at 9:15 a.m. to carpool. The Board discussed the vacancy for District #7. We have 30 days from the letter to fill the vacancy, or it goes to the county commission to appoint. The Board needs to notify the county clerk and give public notice of the vacancy at least two weeks before. The posting will need to include the date, time, and place of the meeting where the vacancy will be filled. The interviews for each candidate who meets the qualifications is held in an open meeting. The county clerk will verify that those applying live in the right area. Following the interviews, the Board could go into a closed session to discuss the candidate interviews and then go back to an open meeting to vote and appoint the person selected. The Board discussed date options and tentatively selected July 28th at 4:00 p.m.

OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD

1. Board Committee Discussions

There were no reports given on Board Committees.

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 David Stirland called the meeting to order and welcomed all visitors. Board members present were Craig Seegmiller, LaRene Cox, Burke Staheli, Ron Wade, Heidi Gunn, and Nannette Simmons. Staff members present were Superintendent Richard Holmes and Business Administrator Brent Bills.

OPEN MEETING – 4:30 p.m.

Reverence by Member Wade

Welcome by Board President Stirland

Pledge of Allegiance by Member Cox

PUBLIC NOTICE OF BOUNDARY HEARING

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Washington County School District is proposing an elementary boundary change between Horizon Elementary School and Washington Elementary School. The proposed change would move the area north of the Virgin River to Telegraph Dr., and east of the Ash Apartments and Townhomes to the back of the homes on Ridge Point Dr. (including homes east of Florence Drive and the Worldwide Sun Resort), from the Horizon Elementary boundary to the Washington Elementary boundary. The Washington County Board of Education will hold a Boundary Hearing on Monday, June 9, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. to receive public comment on the proposed boundary changes.

Maps of the proposed boundary considerations are available on the Washington County School District website at www.washkl2.org.

Nate Esplin said this is an area in Washington City off of Telegraph with about 20 homes that have recently been built. The area around has been covered with an RV storage unit as well as a 55 and older community. Because there are some new homes being built right behind there on the south end, we would like to move those into Washington Elementary from Horizon Elementary. The surrounding boundary is Washington Elementary School. It is less than a mile to Washington Elementary. Currently there are not any Washington County School District students in that area. There is one student who will be in kindergarten next year. He has contacted that family to let them know about the proposal. Letters have been sent out to all the homeowners in the proposed boundary area on the new Desert Cactus Street

with about 20 homes. Nate Esplin explained that the west side of the area in the Washington Elementary boundary and the east side of the RV parking and 55+ community are in the Coral Canyon Elementary boundary. This is the second public hearing, and a public comment meeting was also held at Washington Elementary with no public comments given.

No public comments were given.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes
 - a. May 12, 2025 Meeting of the Board of Education
2. Financial Report
3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items
4. Dixie Middle School TSSA Plan Change
5. Snow Canyon High School TSSA Plan Change

David Stirland mentioned that under item #3 the Board will also be approving the compensation for executive administrators and school administrators.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

There were no public comments on Board Action Items.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Policy 3330 Food Services (Purpose and General Policy) – Darin Thomas

Darin Thomas briefly reviewed the changes to Policy 3330 Food Services (Purpose and General Policy). He explained that under section 3.1.5, it adds that it is the duty of the custodian to keep tables and benches in clean condition as well as sweeping, mopping, and other necessary cleaning of the dining room and floors. The policy will make it clear that the custodian is the one who needs to be in charge of cleaning those specific areas.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve Policy 3330 Food Services (Purpose and General Policy). Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Policy 1930 Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators (SHiNE) Program – Darin Thomas

Darin Thomas reviewed the proposed new policy from the last legislative session. The SHiNE program is replacing the TSSP program. Individuals would apply through the state for the TSSP program. Now with the SHiNE program the funds will come to each LEA, and we will oversee it. This policy is based off the current legislation for who is eligible. SHiNE stands for Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators. Having a policy was required by legislation. The executive staff had to determine what our highly qualified needs were. Each LEA could be different. It was determined our needs were secondary math, integrated science 7 or 8, chemistry, physics, computer science, and Special Education. Under section 2.3, we have to handle the online applications. HR will go through the applications to make sure that everybody has correct degrees, etc. Burke Staheli asked if additional help would be hired, but Darin Thomas said HR is going to try to take care of it. David Stirland mentioned under section 2.2 that the annual salary supplement award is up to \$4563. Darin Thomas explained that a full-time teacher in the approved subject area would receive the full \$4563. If the teacher is only part-time in the subject area they would receive the part-time percent of the full amount. Brent Bills said the amount we received from the state this year is based off the number of qualified teachers we had last year. Darin Thomas said about half of the qualified teachers last year were Special Education teachers. The salary supplement has to be part of their monthly salary, so it will be divided into 12 months. The information will be sent out to all of our employees on July 1st, and the online application will be open for six weeks to give eligible teachers the opportunity to apply. The District will make sure they have their endorsements and will check PowerSchool for correct assignments. This will be our first year doing this as an LEA. In the past it was taken care of by the state. Burke Staheli feels it will really help our Special Education teachers.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve Policy 1930 Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators (SHiNE) Program. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Policy 3620 Campus Management – Steve Gregoire

Steve Gregoire said the intermediate schools were not present in the current policy. The proposed changes now add the intermediate schools under the semi-closed campus management system. He explained that with semi-closed the students cannot leave the campus unless the parent has authorized for their student to leave the campus during the lunch hour or at other times.

Board Member Cox presented a motion to approve Policy 3620 Campus Management. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Policy 3635 Student Overnight Activities – Steve Gregoire

Steve Gregoire said the policy currently allows overnight travel for students in 8th through 12th grade. It is being changed to 9th through 12th grade. The changes also shift section 3.2.2.1 on chaperones up in the policy. David Stirland said there were just a couple of exceptions for 8th grade to travel overnight, so this cleans it up.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve Policy 3635 Student Overnight Activities. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Proposed Elementary Boundary Change – Nate Esplin

David Stirland said the boundary change was described earlier in the meeting and said it is basically a small area north of the virgin river to Telegraph Drive in Washington. We have held three meetings and have had no comments. Burke Staheli said it is a commonsense change that we are doing for new building that is within a mile of Washington Elementary.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve the proposed elementary boundary change between Horizon and Washington as proposed. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Sale of Property – Brent Bills

Brent Bills said there are four pieces of property that the District would like the Board to approve for sale. Two of the properties were purchased a number of years ago by the CTE program to build homes on. Moving the program to CT High left the property quite a distance from the school to the point where it was not practical. We have had the property up for sale for a while and have received offers for the property at 2436 E. White Horse Drive and 2432 E. White Horse Drive in Washington. He asked the Board for approval to sell these two properties.

Board Member Simmons presented a motion to approve the sale of the two properties as described. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Brent Bills said we also have the old preschool/Southwest High building located at 16 S. 300 W. in St. George. The District received a full value offer for this property, and he recommended that the Board accept this offer.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the sale of property. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Brent Bills said the final piece of property is the old JROTC building across from Dixie High School. He mentioned some concern because some of the interest has been from different schools and we don't like having the kids going back and forth across the street. There really is not enough parking there to do a school and that is a really busy street, so he has been trying to resolve this issue. He suggested doing a counteroffer that states it is subject to a restricted covenant to be recorded with the trustee at time of closing. Said covenant shall restrict the property from use as a school for ages 6 through 17. Such restrictions shall include but not be limited to a trade or CTE curriculum or regular curriculum or any regular education operations supporting the ages described above. Restrictions shall expire no earlier than

10 years from the date of the sale. Seller to prepare and file the language of the covenant at its own discretion. He asked the Board to accept the sale at the same price with the addendum.

Board Member Wade presented a motion to approve the sale of property with the addendum. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Superintendent

Superintendent Richard Holmes briefly reported on the Principal Academy that took place last week. It was a great week with three days of training for the principals. They are now attending additional training up north. We mentioned that we do have two principals being recognized with state awards and will report more on them in August. He also mentioned that Crimson Cliffs High School was the 4A State Baseball Champion, Crimson Cliffs High School was also the 4A Boys Soccer Champion, Desert Hills High School was the 4A State Boys Tennis Champion, and Crimson Cliffs High School was the 4A State Girls Golf Champion. We had a great spring, and he commended the coaches, parents, and student athletes for their accomplishments and the great work they do. Superintendent Richard Holmes also expressed appreciation to Nannette Simmons for her work as a board member and wished her the best.

Board

David Stirland expressed appreciation for Nannette Simmons and the exceptional work she has done on the School Board.

Association

There was no report given.

PTA/PTO/Community Council

There was no report given.

PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 minutes each

No public comments were given.

Board Member Cox presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:03 p.m. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT