



MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah
August 11, 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 Craig Hammer, Board Member Heidi Gunn, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Susan Harrah, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, Assessment & Research Director Brian Stevenson, Student Services Director Brad Christensen.

Also present: President Jordan Rushton, Vice President Camille Lyman

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence offered by Board Member Hammer.

WORK SESSION

Meeting with Dixie Technical College

President Jordan Rushton said the biggest celebration and challenge they have had is growth. When they moved into that new facility up there on the hill in 2017, they assumed they would have some growth. They thought they would spend the next 10 or 15 years growing into that space. He said they are all a little bit shocked at how quickly they have filled up the space. They had 23 programs when they started there on the hill and now have 29 accredited programs. They have been able to add some programs and bring on new instructors. Since moving into their building, they have averaged between 15-25% growth year over year. He mentioned that the community is also recognizing the importance of technical education. As more people start to consider how much higher ed costs and issues with student debt rising, an affordable option like Dixie Tech becomes very attractive especially when you're seeing some of these occupations and jobs in high demand and are paying very well. He feels it is an exciting time to be in technical education. President Rushton said figuring out to really strengthen the partnerships and relationships with both industry and education partners has been really important to him. He wants to assure that if a student chooses to start at Dixie Tech that they will not have to repeat anything if they continue on and that they won't miss anything by starting at Dixie Tech. They are also going to give students credit for the competencies in areas where the school district has provided some quality CTE instruction. He feels they have a better relationship with the school district and high schools. He said the same can be said for the university. He appreciates the opportunity to work closely with Chris Homer. There is a great partnership with CT High School, and he feels they will continue to see more students coming directly from CT High especially as they develop those pathways. He feels it has been a good thing having members from the Board of Education serving on their board and appreciates that relationship. Vice President Camille Lyman mentioned they are excited to be offering more things in the high schools this year. They are doing their best to get really good technical skills in the hands of the students. President Jordan Rushton shared about meetings to discuss the development of CT High School. It is important to have a relationship where we are communicating what things should be at the high schools and what things should be at Dixie Technical College. He feels we are in a good place

navigating the programs at CT High and Dixie Tech so there are no duplications of efforts. He mentioned one of the highlights each year is to recognize the high school students who are graduating with their degree. They have been working to create programs to take to the high schools for students who cannot come to Dixie Tech. He does meet regularly with Chris Homer to discuss the pathways and how they can work together. They are still working to find ways to publicize some of the pathways better to students. Vice President Camille Lyman said they are not teacher a specific program at CT High, but they do have teacher that go to the school and help teach some of the content. Jordan Rushton said they currently have about 2200 students and are still growing. They are at capacity with the programs they have. The legislature has approved for an additional building to be built on campus. They are hoping to have it ready in the next two year. Vice President Camille Lyman mentioned that electrical seems to be the biggest program at the school as well as healthcare, computer technology, and automotive. President Jordan Rushton said that web and app development, and digital design are programs that may be impacted by artificial intelligence. He also reported on the relationship with industry and feels that new access roads may help bring additional businesses to the area. He mentioned that it is an accreditation requirement to be governed by local industry. They meet to determine what needs industry has. He mentioned that the state subsidy helps to keep the cost more affordable for students. He mentioned he has talked with Chris Homer about doing a cosmetology program. They would bring the program to CT High School. The school will need to have space for the program. The college would bring the instructors and curriculum. They would then be able to report that they are meeting their legislative mandate. Superintendent Richard Holmes said the District has a great relationship with Dixie Tech. The things they are doing tie in closely with what the state is wanting to happen with high schools. President Rushton has transformed the relationship with the District.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to go into a closed session at 1:10 p.m. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

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CLOSED SESSION

Property and Personnel Items

Property and legal items were discussed.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 2:18 p.m. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Bryan Dyer shared a report on the projects throughout the District. The floors have all been poured at Snow Canyon Middle School and they are now putting up the tilt up sections. He mentioned that he is excited about the color scheme. The CMGC process has been really good with this project. The estimated time of completion is May 2027. Occupancy will be fall of 2027. The Dixie High School Vocational building foundation is done. It is also scheduled for a May 2027 completion. Enterprise High School is on phase three. They have started painting and are doing ceilings in the classrooms. They have also rewired the counseling center. They have redone the flooring and are replacing the lockers. The intercom system wiring also needed to be redone. Pine View Middle School has the concrete poured at the front entrance and should be ready for school to start. They have done a retention wall and new landscaping. They did a new branding design for the entrance. The Pine View High weight room has been redone, and they are working on the stadium stairs. Their first game is scheduled for Friday. They do have a game plan to be ready for the next home game. He mentioned that VCBO is working on plans

for the locker room renovation. They plan to start in November. That project will take about one year. Rusty Taylor said the seats are out of the auditorium. They have been working on the lighting. They did find more work on flooring for the band and orchestra rooms. The school is working with the middle and intermediate schools for their theater production and have all three schools participating. Burke Staheli mentioned they have two road games for the next couple of weeks which allows a little more time for the stadium stairs. Rusty Taylor reported that the Pine View schools had great attendance at their Back-to-School Night.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go into a closed session at 2:35 p.m. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

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CLOSED SESSION

Personnel Items

Personnel items were discussed.

Board Member Cox presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 3:44 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

WORK SESSION

WCSD Food Services – Kathy Torok

David Stirland introduced Kathy Torok, our new food services director. Kathy Torok introduced herself and shared her history in Washington County School District and other districts. She mentioned that ordering was already done for this year, but they are trying to do a few tweaks to the menu. They are hiring a chef and want to do some new recipes and taste tests to see what the kids like. She has been working with school lunch for 23 years. She wants her staff to have fun and the kids to have fun. They tried bringing new pizza options today allowing students to have choices. She mentioned that while working in Sevier School District they hired a company to help share social media posts with the parents and community about school lunch. She has also asked that the schools include salad bar be part of the service line instead of after the line. Students can build a good salad as part of their meal. Burke Staheli said he would like to work on a way to eliminate waste. She mentioned that several schools are starting shared tables for students to leave packaged or full fruits to be washed and put out the next morning. LaRene Cox asked about milk substitute options. Kathy Torok said it is an option to have a milk substitute with a doctor note. She also mentioned that there are more dietary allergies now than in the past.

Water Irrigation Company Update – President David Stirland and Vice President LaRene Cox

LaRene Cox shared a quick update from Water Canyon. Hildale City has a signed agreement and are working on the phase going up to Maxwell Canyon. They will be finished in about four weeks. They are helping with a right-of-way for us. David Stirland said they are making progress.

Water Conservancy District MOU

No discussion at this time.

Policy 2920 Student Enrollment – Rusty Taylor

Rusty Taylor reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 2920 Student Enrollment. He said he wants to make sure that we clarify our purpose and intent for our administrators so they can make the best decisions possible. He wants to make sure that we are really clear on enrollment options to the public and what it takes. He also wants to make sure we close some real and some perceived loopholes that are out there with boundary waivers and update some changes with the laws and regulations. He highlighted some of the significant changes. He said he went over the policy with legal counsel and with the board leadership. One of the changes was to define a boundary waiver. It had never been defined in the policy before. This will help people understand that it is different than open enrollment. Open enrollment is Utah law. A boundary waiver is our District. Another change is with proof of residency. In our current policy it was very light. The policy change links it to what is stated in law that temporary vacation and secondary rented home, apartments or other residential dwellings should not be considered for the purposes of student residency. Each student's address will be verified with two artifacts of appropriate documentation, as listed in the state list, at the school to determine that the primary residence is within the boundary. Rusty Taylor said as needed, he will do a visit as a district official to verify the residency. He said the UHSAA has a pretty good rule that's held up so far. If you transfer without an exception, you miss half of the varsity season. The state doesn't regulate the younger kids, but we can. That is part of what we are trying to do in the policy. It was mentioned that we cannot stop a student from repeating 8th grade because of state law. Cheri Stevenson said we have looked at data and it is very rare. It requires a meeting with the Student Services Director and data has to be looked at. Brad Christensen said as he talks to the parents, he tells them it is not good for most kids. It could be reasonable if the child has been bullied or is struggling academically or socially because they have a later birthday. Rusty Taylor said that the policy also includes that providing false or misleading information regarding residency will result in the student being unenrolled from the out of boundary school and will only be allowed enrollment in their boundary school. The boundary waiver is different from open enrollment. When you close a school, you close it for open enrollment. The boundary waiver is principal to principal contact for kids that just need to be in a different school. Principals will also consider staffing numbers when looking at boundary waivers. Students may not transfer to another school for a program or class that is offered at their current school. We don't want picking classes or schools based on teachers or programs. The changes also all the Superintendent or designee to suspend boundary waivers. He has also removed boundary waivers only being considered for health reasons of students. This allows parents to be more up front as to why they want the boundary waiver so we can deal with them a bit better. Principals are starting to do this, and they are denying more and more boundary waivers. Principals are on board with the policy changes. Rusty Taylor explained that open enrollment is legislated, and we can't deny enrollment if the school is declared open. A boundary waiver is a principal calling a principal to explain the situation and working with them. It requires our principals to really talk with each other. Nate Esplin mentioned for elementary it is usually for daycare reasons or dual immersion programs. Elementary boundary waivers must be redone each year. At the secondary level it is done once for the cone-site. The boundary waiver does not carry over from 5th to 6th grade. Open enrollment and boundary waivers are significantly different. Rusty Taylor shared the Boundary Waiver Application. The process had changed from the parent going to both principals, to the parent going to the school they would like to attend to apply. The principal of the two schools will have a conversation. We will have the documentation that the principals talked about it and agree or deny the request. The paper never goes back to the parent. It should streamline the process a little. The registrar will put the request and principal comments into PowerSchool. Then we have the data showing if it was a boundary waiver or open enrollment. There is no appeal of the principal decision. Students must be enrolled in and attend classes in person for grades 6-12. If the students want to enroll online, they can do it at their boundary school. If attending a different school on a boundary waiver, the student needs to attend some of the classes in person or there is no need for the transfer. Craig Hammer said the UHSAA only governs 10-12, but previously the board has said because of the direct line, if you participate in 9th grade at a middle school you are eligible at the feeder high school. He said it goes way back. Rusty Taylor said it is not in writing. Craig Hammer explained a previous situation wanting to transfer to a different high school from 9th grade. Rusty Taylor said the UHSAA has a different rule. Heidi Gun mentioned that we are different from other high schools in northern Utah. Our schools do have a direct line to the high school. Not every district has alignment between their schools so

it might be a good thing to include in policy. Craig Hammer said the only one who should approve that would be the principals. Rusty Taylor will put that information in policy for discussion next month.

Policy 3740 AI – Jeremy Cox

Discussion postponed to Open Meeting.

LaVerkin Elementary School – Superintendent Richard Holmes

No discussion at this time.

Foreign Student Placement – Brad Christensen

Discussion postponed.

Update on Projects – Superintendent Richard Holmes

Discussed earlier in meeting.

FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING

Safe Schools

Brad Christensen said we have two guardians at each school.

Washington City Property

Discussed in Closed Session.

Negotiations

Nothing to discuss.

Legislators

Nothing to discuss.

OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD

Board Committee Discussions

Nothing discussed.

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 Craig Hammer. 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 Stirland

Pledge of Allegiance by Member Cox

CTSO Recognitions – Jon Butler

Jon Butler said each year thousands of students across Utah participate in Career and Technical student organizations (CTO). Students showcase their talents and participate in state level competitions. Students who placed at the state level earned the privilege to represent Utah at the national level this year. Washington County had an impressive group who qualified. He celebrated some additional achievements and mentioned that one of the CTO chapters earned the Gold Chapter of Excellence Award as well as the

Cecil Cellars Spirit Award. He also reported that Derek Smith, Career Tech High School was named the Skills USA Utah CTSO Advisor of the Year. The CTSO advisors from the high schools took a moment to introduce their students and celebrate some of their national recognitions.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Minutes**
 - a. June 9, 2025 Meeting of the Board of Education**
 - b. June 23, 2025 Special Meeting of the Board of Education**
 - c. July 14, 2025 Special Meeting of the Board of Education**
 - d. July 14, 2025 Special Meeting of the Board of Education**
- 2. Financial Report**
- 3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items**
- 4. South Mesa Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 5. Three Falls Elementary TSSA and SLT Plan Change**
- 6. Arrowhead Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 7. TSSA Plan Change for Schools**
- 8. Paradise Canyon Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 9. UHSAA 150-Mile Requests**

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

No public comments were given on Board Action Items.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Comprehensive Guidance Approval - Warren Hall

Warren Hall shared information on the Comprehensive Guidance program. He shared a graph that shows how counselors spend their time at the different school levels and the difference between a school counselor vs. a mental health therapist. He shared that in 2024-2025, 8569 Concurrent Enrollment classes were passed, 330 students enrolled at Dixie Technical College, and 93 students completed their general education certificate from Utah Tech University. He said in Comprehensive Guidance program, the counselors do data projects each year. This year the data projects will have focuses on a wide range of topics including increasing academic achievement for students, increasing college and career readiness engagement, pathway completers, and reducing absences. There are a lot of good things that the data projects help track. Usually, the data projects are multi-year projects. There are some really exciting things that they are working to implement this year including program reviews for elementary school counselors, a new counselor training program to help them get established in our schools and having elementary school counselor data projects. He feels this is going to benefit the schools in our District and most of all the students by finding out what our needs are and how we can better support them. Each year it is a state requirement to get approval for the school Comprehensive Guidance program for grades 7-12. It is not required for the elementary schools because the state doesn't fully fund them. He requested Board approval.

Board Member Hammer presented a motion to approve the Comprehensive Guidance program. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Hurricane City Pool – Rusty Taylor

Rusty Taylor reported that Hurricane City is currently rebuilding their city swimming pool and approached the School District about a partnership. The city pool has been used by the Hurricane High Swim Team. They would like the School District to invest in the pool and in turn would offer the school some prime time for their swimming team practice, be a backup for other schools if needed, and be there for elementary schools as they have swim activities. The Board asked about an MOU. Rusty Taylor said he is still waiting for it from Hurricane City. The Board would like to see the specifics before approving it.

Board Member Wade presented a motion to table the approval of the Hurricane City Pool MOU. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policy 3740 AI – Jeremy Cox

Jeremy Cox reviewed the proposed Policy 3740 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use. He said it is a very challenging policy to write. He thought he would be able to see what other districts had done and model it after some of their policies. He found that no one has addressed this yet and is very new. He based the policy based off of the USBE framework and on a lot of feedback. The purpose states that the District recognizes AI's potential to enhance educational experiences, improve efficiency for educators, and prepare students for an AI-assisted future. The District also recognizes AI's potential to be used in a manner that is harmful to critical thinking and the learning process by removing key factors of personal learning and discovery. AI could really be looked at both ways and the policy seeks to find balance in that. The policy addresses a couple of key items in section two identifying the teacher as the expert and AI as an assistant. The teacher needs to vet things as they come through, having human oversight and judgment, using it ethically and responsibly, and be transparent in its use. Under the procedures it includes that the District will not be using confidential or protected data as a general rule unless it is otherwise exempted. The District will be fully compliant with sensitive and pornographic material laws as with other district policies. The District will have academic integrity and ethical use. The policy gives the process for staff use of AI and the prohibited uses of AI. It includes a list for how teachers should vet AI generated content. It also addressed student use of AI and the permissible uses for them and how it can be used for curricular use. The policy addresses the educator responsibilities when students are using AI to provide digital citizenship, providing supervision, modeling ethical AI use, and clearly communicating to students what they expect when using AI. It addressed the prohibited uses of AI including cheating or plagiarizing. Lastly, it addresses the failure of compliance in using AI and how the District will deal with that. He would like to open the policy for the 30-day discussion. He has received a lot of feedback already from many educators and would like to gather any more feedback and bring it back next month for approval. David Stirland mentioned that it is a fairly significant policy, and the Board may want to extend the time for review. Ron Wade mentioned it is a complicated issue and expressed appreciation to Jeremy Cox for his work on the policy. LaRene Cox asked if this would be a living policy with AI changing so rapidly. Jeremy Cox said there is a good chance that we will need to change it often because AI is so new and we will continue to receive more guidance. The key will be to start with something we feel good about so that we can start using it. It is already being used to some degree in the schools. We want to put some guidelines on that and give a good framework and a good policy out to the schools. He feels that we will be changing the policy frequently over the next little while as we start to navigate this brand-new subject.

INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no information items.

REPORTS

Superintendent

Superintendent Richard Holmes said the first day of school went well. He did not receive any reports of busing issues with the younger students. Our teachers and principals have been working hard. It is rewarding but very hard work. He reported that the District received recognition from the Sutherland Institute for providing parents and the public with convenient access to information about school curriculum. He thanked those who were involved with that. It is a nice award to have. We try to do our very best to get information out regarding the curriculum, so parents are fully aware of what we are teaching in our schools. He thanked the Technology and Professional Learning departments for getting that information out. Superintendent Richard Holmes recognized Susan Moore, Bloomington Elementary, who was selected as the Innovative Principal of the Year for the State of Utah. Superintendent Richard Holmes recognized Gabbi Young, LaVerkin Elementary, who was selected as the Rural Schools Principal of the Year for the State of Utah.

Board

David Stirland welcomed Craig Hammer to the Board.

Association

Annette Croucher reported that the WCEA is just getting everything up and going for the year.

PTA/PTO/Community Council

There were no reports given.

PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 minutes each

Jenny Chamberlain shared her concern with the amount of time kids are waiting at the school for the bus to come home. She did hear from Rusty Taylor who thinks they have been able to resolve the issue for this year, so she expressed her thanks. She appreciates everything done in the School District. She is also concerned about the size of PE classes in the intermediate schools. Her child experienced a little bit of bullying and felt if the classes were smaller, it would be better for the students and the teachers. She asked the Board to see if there is anything that could be done.

Amanda Davis did not address the Board.

Board Member Cox presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT