

Board of Education Work Session - Oct 28 2025 Minutes

Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Tooele County School District 92 Lodestone Way Tooele, Utah 84074

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT THE NOVEMBER 11, 2025, BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

1. Executive Session at 5:30 pm

Board members present: Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, Scott Bryan, Todd Thompson, Elizabeth Smith (5:33 pm), Emily Syphus (5:38 pm).

Administration present: Dr. Mark Ernst, Lark Reynolds, Jackie Gallegos, Terry Christensen

1.1 Collective Bargaining

1.2 Pending or Reasonably Imminent Litigation

1.3 Purchase, Exchange, or Release of Real Property

2. Work Session 6pm (A work session is intended to provide opportunities for board members to study issues in depth, gather and analyze information, and clarify situations and potential solutions. The Board will not make decision or take any action during a work session. While open to the public, these sessions are more informal than the regular board meeting.)

2.1 Welcome and Roll Call

Board Members Present: Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, Elizabeth Smith, ValaRee Shields, Todd Thompson, Emily Syphus, Scott Bryan

Administration Present: Dr. Mark Ernst, Lark Reynolds, Dr Cody Reutzel, Heather Castagno, Brett Valdez, Angie Gillette, Dr. Sarah Jarnagin, Brad Hranicky, Terry Christensen, Ian Silva, Charles Hansen

2.2 K-2 Devices Best Practices

Dustin Nelson, Technology Director, along with the Educational Technology Coaches, presented an overview of the K-2 Chromebook initiative, emphasizing the importance of touchscreen devices for early learners. All K-2 students currently receive HP X360 touchscreen Chromebooks, which are developmentally appropriate and essential for engaging with key instructional tools. Touch capability is required for assessments like Acadience and enhances usability in platforms such as Nearpod and Waggle. The devices are designed to remain with students through 4th grade, aligning with the typical 4-5 year lifespan of a Chromebook. Since these devices are not sent home, they experience less wear and tear, supporting long-term use.

The team highlighted how Clever badge login simplifies access for young students, removing the barrier of typing and reducing classroom disruptions. Chromebooks are integrated into daily instruction for 30-50 minutes, four days a week, supporting core curriculum in literacy (Wonders, Lexia) and math (Into Math, Waggle), as well as engagement tools like Nearpod and Adobe Express. Teachers reported that the touchscreen and QR code features significantly improved classroom management and student participation.

The program also supports real-time data tracking and differentiation, allowing educators to tailor instruction to individual student needs. Teachers expressed appreciation for the increased support and professional growth opportunities provided through the EdTech coaching cycles. These cycles offered personalized, in-classroom support and helped teachers integrate technology meaningfully into instruction. One kindergarten teacher shared that the coaching experience changed her perception of what her students could achieve with tools like Nearpod.

The initiative aligns with TCSD's Moonshot Goals for 2033, including achieving 75% proficiency in K-3 literacy and math,

a 90% graduation rate, and eliminating turnaround status in all schools. Additionally, the program supports Utah's digital literacy standards by introducing students to foundational technology skills such as device operations, keyboarding, computational thinking, and basic programming concepts.

Member Syphus questioned, as she has observed when substituting, and the challenges it brings when students don't want to use the technology. Lisa Erickson discussed that this is the opportunity for the teacher to work with those students who need extra time and support.

Member Shields questioned if sometimes teachers use technology too much in the classroom, and Lisa stated that she said sometimes it is pulling technology back. Esther stated that not all screen time is created equal; there is active and passive screen time.

During the board discussion on the K-2 Chromebook initiative, Member Syphus shared concerns based on her experiences as a substitute teacher, noting that some students are hesitant to use technology in the classroom. In response, Lisa Erickson, Educational Technology Coach, explained that these situations present valuable opportunities for teachers to provide individualized support and help students build confidence with digital tools.

Member Shields raised a question about the potential overuse of technology in instructional settings. Lisa Erickson acknowledged the importance of maintaining a balanced approach and noted that educators sometimes need to intentionally reduce technology use to meet learning objectives. Adding to the conversation, Esther Barney, also an Educational Technology Coach, emphasized that not all screen time is the same—highlighting the distinction between active, purposeful engagement and passive consumption.

2.3 Area Directors Report

The Area Directors—Brad Hranicky, Dr. Sarah Jarnagin, and Angie Gillette—presented an overview of their strategic focus and progress for the 2025–2026 academic year. The presentation addressed key findings from the Legislative Auditor General's report, which emphasized the need for

improved principal development and stronger alignment between district departments and instructional leadership.

The directors outlined their purpose: to leverage their collective expertise to guide and develop confident, capable school leaders. Their primary goal for the year is to ensure that instructional leadership is addressed in at least 90% of Area Director visits, as measured by a standardized visit form.

To achieve this, the directors reported on several initiatives:

- Alignment of principal practices with district frameworks such as the Strategic Model, Moonshot Goals, and Utah Educational Leadership Standards.
- Implementation of consistent coaching practices, data dives, and classroom visits (targeting five classrooms per week).
- Use of shared tools, including a principal coaching form, evaluation rubrics, and a Launch Pad resource hub for principals.
- Monthly area breakouts and horizontal breakouts (by school level) to review policy, share case studies, and foster collaboration.
- Provisional Administrator Professional Learning sessions focused on leadership development and practical case studies.

The directors also shared data from monthly visits, showing how time was allocated across key instructional areas, including the Instructional Framework (21%), CFA Implementation (17%), AHLPS (17%), and Moon Goals (13%).

Challenges were acknowledged, including balancing instructional leadership with daily operational demands. However, the directors highlighted several celebrations:

- Purpose-driven monthly area breakouts aligned with the Strategic Model.
- Strengthened collaboration and communication with principals and teachers.
- Continued commitment from school leaders to instructional improvement despite ongoing challenges.

Board Member Shields inquired about the collaboration between the Area Directors and the Teaching and Learning Department. Dr. Jarnagin confirmed that the Area Directors

are actively involved in laying the groundwork for the district's Teaching and Learning Plan, ensuring alignment across departments.

Member Thompson asked whether there are established best practice standards that guide principal effectiveness. Mr. Hranicky responded that the district emphasizes system-wide support and provides principals with ample networking opportunities to share and implement best practices. He noted that these efforts are part of the strategy to reinforce consistent leadership standards across schools.

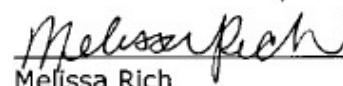
Member Thompson also raised the issue of principal burnout. Mr. Hranicky shared that he prioritizes building strong relationships with principals, which allows him to recognize when they are facing significant challenges. Ms. Gillette added that being approachable and fostering trust are essential to supporting school leaders effectively.

President Rich commended the leadership team, stating that the Legislative Auditor has recognized the district's efforts. She affirmed that the team is demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and a willingness to adapt in support of student and staff success.

3. Adjourn Work Session

At 7:36 pm a motion was made to adjourn the work session and move back into Executive Session to discuss

- 3.1 Character, Professional Competence, or Physical or Mental Health of an Individual



Melissa Rich
School Board President