



**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Washington County School District**  
**121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah**  
**October 27, 2025**  
**2:00 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 Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Professional Learning Director Brian Stevenson, Student Services Director Brad Christensen, and Facilities Director Bryan Dyer.*

*Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

**Reverence by Member Gunn.**

**FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING**

**Hurricane Pool MOU – Rusty Taylor**

Rusty Taylor said the MOU is with the Hurricane City attorneys. We have agreed to everything and are waiting to receive the MOU back from them and he will get it to Terry Hutchinson for review. Their concern was the money that we have agreed to pay \$1 million upfront for 30 years of access. He mentioned that they have been great to work with.

**NSBA and COSSBA Spring Conferences**

David Stirland feels NSBA may becoming a little less relevant for our District. Brent Bills shared some of the history with NSBA, the controversial letter, and how COSSBA was started. Only one or two states participate in both conferences. Most participate in one or the other. David Stirland feels there has been a shift in ideology and thought. He would like to get ideas that would be relevant for Washington County School District. Craig Seegmiller feels NSBA has been drifting for many years. It has slowly become more urban and liberal. Brent Bills said COSSBA is an association of state school boards. The District could not be a member. The District is not a member of NSBA either. He said the cost is very similar. Burke Staheli feels that USBA does things to unify our state at the NSBA Conference. It was reported that Richard Stowell had supported the District's idea to attend COSSBA and see what it is about. The board discussed the options. Brent Bills also reviewed the COSSBA dates for 2027 and 2028. Most feel it is a huge advantage to have everyone on the board attending together. It was decided to send three to COSSBA to see what it is like and all to NSBA this year. Craig Seegmiller, LaRene Cox, and Ron Wade will attend COSSBA this year.

**Board PLC Training – Wade Jensen**

Wade Jensen highlight the work of James Sparks from our professional development team to show the work he is doing. James Sparks is the English language Coordinator for secondary education and has many other roles. He shared a video from James explaining what he does. His role is to support teachers, schools, and leaders by working alongside them to strengthen teaching and learning at every level. Through collaboration, resource creation, data analysis, and instructional support he helps to build collective capacity to increase learning and success. He supports all PK-12 teachers through new hire

onboarding and new teacher orientation helping them start their career with confidence. He provides ongoing support through mentoring, coaching, monthly newsletters, professional learning, and the new teacher website he designed. Through mentoring and collaboration, his group has been able to reduce the typical 30% performance gap between new and veteran teachers and also contribute to our District's exceptional teacher retention. WCSD retains 72.8% of educators after five years which is well above the state average of 56.1%. He works with learning coaches to strengthen their skills in guiding teachers. This includes customized coaching on-site visits, facilitating monthly learning coach forums, teaching new learning coach sessions, and co-teaching courses as part of the Teacher Leader Endorsement. Through these efforts, learning coaches become highly effective mentors, directly supporting teacher growth and student learning outcomes. He also supports teachers pursuing an alternative pathway to educator licensing. He works in secondary English Language Arts focusing on strengthening instruction, curriculum, PLC collaboration across grades 6-12. Wade Jensen highlighted some of the things from the video and said there is a coordinator for every grade level and they do similar training. In secondary education, they have asked him to guide their focus teams. At every intermediate, middle and high school there is an English Language focus team. We have seen a drastic increase in growth and proficiency in Language Arts in all the schools. We are now putting that across the District. All this is done under Brian Stevenson's team over at the Professional Learning Center. Amazing things are happening. Almost 73% of the teachers are still with us after five years. The state average is about 55%. We retain our teachers and I think we can credit that to our professional team as well as our great administrators and schools. Teachers feel supported and that they have the resources that they need. James helps with the APPEL program for those who do not have a degree but want to become a teacher. He helps them get the necessary endorsements. James is one of many of our wonderful professionals that do amazing work. Brian Stevenson said what his staff does is provides high quality resources to make our teacher's job easier. Ron Wade pointed out that this is one of the great reasons why public schools are the way to go. Charter schools don't have ongoing educational development for teachers. Wade Jensen said most of the training happens on early out Friday. Principals absolutely love the support team because they have someone that's focused on the academic part that can support and help teachers. Ron Wade asked about the gap of capacity for new teachers. Brian Stevenson said one of the major goals is knowing that the new teachers will be coming in without all the experience but will work with a team to help them bridge that gap. Cheri Stevenson mentioned another nice thing is that we keep our professional learning in-house so that we can stay focused on our values and mission. The board and staff talked about the support teachers receive through WCSD. Craig Seegmiller said he would like to see some of the student data showing the learning evidence. Brian Stevenson will share data in the November meeting.

#### **District Branding – Superintendent Richard Holmes**

The presentation on District Branding was postponed.

#### **WORK SESSION**

##### **Principal Pool Interviews – December 3<sup>rd</sup> – Superintendent Richard Holmes**

Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned we need three board members for the Principal Pool interviews on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. David Stirland said it has generally been rotated and will get information to see who did the interviews last year. Superintendent Richard Holmes suggested keeping candidates in the pool for two years. Sitting principals are always in the pool. David Stirland shared examples where principals had been in the pool but did not make it the following year. Some have been in the pool multiple times and then don't get in. Additional people could be added to the pool. There have been times where someone in the District would be a perfect fit, but they were not in the pool. It would make the pool bigger. Cheri Stevenson said by interviewing every year it gives us the opportunity to keep people skills sharp in that competitive group. LaRene Cox feels they should be interviewed every year regardless to help sharpen their interview skills. Wade Jensen feels they need to be challenged and doing the work we want them to. He likes the idea of two years. Superintendent Richard Holmes feels the process would begin to stagger after a few years and will balance out. The Board agreed to the proposed change.

##### **Open Enrollment Declaration – Rusty Taylor**

Rusty Taylor shared the Open Enrollment Declaration document. The Open Enrollment designations are based on the formula. By formula, it is recommended to close Bloomington Elementary, Desert Canyons Elementary, Horizon Elementary, Hurricane Elementary, Majestic Fields Elementary, and South Mesa Elementary. Rusty Taylor said the Board does not have to follow the formula for a closed school and can vote to keep it open. The secondary schools to close include Washington Fields Intermediate, Crimson Cliffs Middle, Crimson Cliffs High, Dixie High, and Hurricane High. Rusty Taylor said the recommendation is to not close Dixie High or Hurricane High. He recommends following the formula and keeping the Crimson cone-site schools closed. Nate Esplin reviewed elementary numbers and would recommend Bloomington Elementary remain open. Cheri Stevenson recommended keeping the Crimson cone-site closed. Rusty Taylor feels only Crimson Cliffs High school should be closed as they are about 150 students more than the other schools. He reminded the Board of the legislation that allows students to move schools by just applying. Boundary waivers are still available to principals through the other process of principal approval.

### **America 250 – Nate Esplin**

Nate Esplin shared an update on America 250. September 17<sup>th</sup> was Constitution Day. Some of our Dixie Middle School and LaVerkin Elementary students went to the Washington County Administration Building and read the U.S. Constitution on that day. There were also a few participants from the District office there. The next big event will be the Veteran's Day parade where many of our school bands will be participating. The elementary schools are using that week to remind students about America 250. Jeremy Cox shared the America 250 icon on the website. Clicking on the icon will bring up information about the 250<sup>th</sup> year celebration. It was suggested to have America 250 more visible in every schools. Superintendent Richard Holmes said we could have banners made for every school.

### **Building Update – Bryan Dyer**

Bryan Dyer shared an update on the major building projects in the District. Enterprise High has received final fire clearance for phase 3. They have had new locker replacements, classroom improvements, and counseling suite upgrades. Naylor Wentworth Lund Architects is preparing final bid documents for phase 4, the auditorium renovation. The target bid date is December 11, 2025 and will come to the board for approval on January 12, 2026. Dixie High CTE building has major work in progress. They have the auto shop floor poured and have the framework for the tilt-up panels done. They are working to match the coloring for the panels to the other buildings. The Pine View High Auditorium has the electrical rough-in complete and the road base installed. They are changing the slope of the auditorium. Rusty Taylor said they are doing their theater production at a different location this year. The weight room and stadium stairs are complete and the phase 2 locker room improvements are out for bid. The anticipated start date is December 1<sup>st</sup>. Pine View Middle has the east exterior courtyard under construction right now. The front entrance stairs and landscape are done. Classroom improvements are also done. The media center conference room construction will begin mid-November. He is working with Big D to push the remaining phases along. Snow Canyon Middle has the footings and underground work underway and they are working on masonry and structural steel. The roof installation and membrane installation is also being done. They hope to have the building watertight before winter. They are working on the electrical rough in. They are also doing a mockup of the flashing this week. Everything on the major projects is going well. Brent Bills said we have accomplished more projects in the past year than in prior years. The Capital project list allowed them to do more. Bryan Dyer said they had upwards of 150 projects they were working on this past summer. Bryan Dyer said he sent documents to Culvers on the Hurricane Property.

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

No public comments were given on Board Action Items.

### **BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

**Consideration of a resolution authorizing the issuance and sale of up to \$25,000,000 of General Obligation Refunding Bonds and providing for related matters – Brent Bills**

Matt Dugdale, Stifel, said the District has been proactive in taking advantage of all of all of the refinancing opportunities. Currently interest rates are such that there are some savings to be had. However, he feels like we may be in a better position after the start of the year to pull that trigger as we get closer to one of the call dates on the 2016 bonds. Brent Bills said the District has three series of bonds, 14, 15, and 16 that are outstanding. They would be called and reissued at a lower interest rate. We will also shorten the term a little. There are two rate cuts projected between now and January. January and February are the best times to issue bonds so that is what he is targeting. One thought he had might be using some of the online money to accelerate paying off some of these bonds to pay them down quicker and get out of debt faster. Matt Dugdale shared that recent 20-year bonds were issued at 3.5%. A shorter structure of 5 or 6 years would likely be below 3%. The downside is really just that you leave your bonds outstanding at higher interest rates you don't have to call or redeem them. Brent Bills said if you wait and interest rates go down in a year by 2% then yes, we probably should have waited, but that's not what the markets are looking like. We issued all of these bonds for 15 years. If we call them and issue them out over a shorter period of time and get them paid off, we will save a lot in interest over that period of time. If we get two more hits on interest rates it could be about half a million dollars in savings. Issuing them today would be about \$400,000 in savings. Brent Bills said we want the mechanism in place so if something were to happen between now and January, we could accelerate it if needed.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Consideration of a resolution authorizing the issuance and sale of up to \$25,000,000 of General Obligation Refunding Bonds and providing for related matters as described. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

#### **Hurricane Pool MOU – Rusty Taylor**

The MOU is still with Hurricane City's legal counsel.

**Board Member Hammer presented a motion to table the approval of the Hurricane Pool MOU.**

**Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

#### **Open Enrollment Declaration – Rusty Taylor**

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve the Open Enrollment Declaration with the updated changes to leave Bloomington Elementary, Dixie High School, and Hurricane High School open. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

#### **Sandstone Elementary TSSA Plan Change**

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Sandstone Elementary TSSA Plan Change. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

Brent Bills said Terry Hutchinson suggested a change to the contract for the Water Board. Once it is changed, he can get it signed. He will return it to Alpha Engineering.

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to go into a closed session at 3:54 p.m. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

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#### **CLOSED SESSION**

##### **Property and Personnel Items**

Personnel items

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 4:58 p.m. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT**