



REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION - Aug 26 2025 Minutes

Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 5:30 PM

IRON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2077 West Royal Hunte Drive Cedar City, Utah

1. MEETING OPENING

- 1.1 Call to Order
President Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.
- 1.2 Prayer or Thought
Senator Vickers
- 1.3 Pledge of Allegiance
Superintendent Hatch

2. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- 2.1 Approval of Minutes of the June 17, 2025 Combined Work and Regular Board Meeting; June 17, 2025 Budget Hearing; and July 15, 2025 Board Workshop
- 2.2 Audit and Approval of Warrants
- 2.3 Employment of Personnel
- 2.4 LEA Specific License Approval
- 2.5 Home School/Exemption from School Attendance
- 2.6 Recommendation for Release of Students from School (JEG-R)
- 2.7 Approval of Consent Agenda Items
Motion to accept the consent agenda items as presented.

Moved by: Michelle Tullis

Seconded by: Tiffiney Christiansen

Motion Passes

C. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Recognitions

The Board recognized the following retirees:

Vicky Christian - 23 years of service

Julie Christian - 27 years of service

Linda Nebauer - 25 years of service

Linda Orton - 33 years of service

Cheryl Gurr - 17 years of service

Luane Brown - 20 years of service

Peggy Hillyard - 31 years of service

The Board thanked the retirees for their dedicated service to the students in the Iron County School District.

District Nurse Tiffany Johnson recognized district healthcare providers, Dr. Brian Whitney and Color Country Pediatrics.

Color Country Pediatrics was represented by Dr. Craig Nielson.

3.2 Public Comment

Cole Gibson, father of student at South Elementary, expressed his desire to keep the current South Elementary and build a new facility for Alternative Programs. He also expressed his support for taxes when they fund education. He criticized an individual from Texas who, despite not being involved in the local community, frequently uses ChatGPT and social media to criticize the school board. This highlights a lack of communication and transparency from the school district to the voters.

Kelli Gibson, mother of students at South Elementary, also expressed her desire to keep South Elementary and not trying

to retrofit it for Alternative Programs. She supports any excess district funds into expanding Alternative Education programs. She expressed appreciation for the school board's increased social media efforts and transparency in recent weeks. She thanked the Board for their volunteer service and urged them to listen to the community.

Keith Wanser, retired community member, commended the Board and district staff for their hard work, but argued that the district should live within its means rather than consistently raising tax rates. He expressed concern with what he feels is misleading or incomplete information from the district. He urged the board to seek state funding rather than relying heavily on local tax increases, stressing that many residents, especially retirees, cannot afford ongoing hikes in living costs. He warned that continued tax increases could spark voter backlash and resistance.

CJ Wanser, retired community member, raised legal concerns about the scheduling and conduct of the school board meeting. She indicated she has somewhat of an accounting background and expressed concern that the district's financial reporting might involve potentially misleading practices. She urged the Board for greater transparency and compliance with the law.

Norm Forbush, retired community member, expressed criticism of the school board accusing some of not honoring their oath of office and lacking transparency. He claimed the district's numbers don't add up and public input has been consistently ignored. The tax increase is unnecessary and the district should live within their means like the rest of the community.

Anna Lewin, teacher at Cedar High School, thanked the Board and district leadership for providing educators with a 2% raise. She also expressed her appreciation for working in a fiscally responsible school district.

Jenny Vossler, community member and representative of the Iron County Board of Realtors, indicated that while the organization does not take a firm stance on the timing of the proposed tax rate increase, it is concerned about the financial strain local homeowners are facing. She urged the Board to show restraint and consider delaying the tax increase as a way to rebuild public trust and suggested using bonds as they are a more effective and trusted method for funding school projects.

Terri Sanders, Principal at Cedar High School, thanked the Board for finding solutions to problems the district is facing. She offered to share actual data with anyone questioning the district's transparency. She acknowledged the significant growth and change over the past 32 years that she has taught at Cedar High. She gave support for necessary funding even though she no longer has children in school as there are real and pressing needs of students in the district.

Sharon Sadd, community member, expressed concern about the meeting not being legal. She opposed the tax increase, criticized district spending and the salaries of district administrators. She urged the Board to use existing surplus funds instead of raising taxes and called for greater fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability.

Brad Green, community member, acknowledged the Board has the legal authority to propose tax increases, but warned that the public also has the right to support or reject those decisions. He revealed that some residents, including himself, are protesting property taxes by intentionally slow paying them. He urged the Board to make decisions that foster public support rather than provoke resistance.

Steve Schofield, Principal of Alternative Education, pointed out that the school has operated for 25 years in modular buildings and has long functioned with limited resources. He noted that his teachers often feel undervalued and

unrecognized because they work in an alternative setting, yet they play a crucial role by helping students graduate who likely wouldn't succeed in traditional high schools. He conveyed fatigue from repeatedly asking his staff to suck it up and keep going despite the lack of support.

Debra Campos, Counselor at Launch High School, emphasized the life-saving impact of Alternative Programs, questioning why no one had mentioned the value of saving students' lives. She urged the Board to consider the cost, not in dollars, but in human impact.

Shelby Carpenter, SpEd teacher at Southwest Education Academy (SEA), shared her deep conviction about the value of alternative education. After 17 years teaching 4th grade, she said her current work at SEA is where she truly sees the greatest impact. She emphasized that SEA serves students who would otherwise drop out of traditional high schools, helping them become successful graduates—many of whom are the first in their families to finish high school. Carpenter invited board members to visit SEA, meet the students, and witness firsthand the hope and transformation the school provides.

She acknowledged the difficulty of the board's decision but urged them to recognize the life-changing role SEA plays for its students.

Michelle Barkameyer, retired community member, expressed concern over the rising cost of living, particularly for seniors on fixed incomes. She sympathized with educators working under limited budgets and supported better conditions for students, such as real classrooms instead of portables. However, she questioned why the district continues to raise taxes when it reportedly has a large surplus.

Ryan Lee, father of two students in the Iron County School District, expressed concern over the proposed tax increase. He pointed out the real financial impact it could have on families. He questioned the need for a tax increase especially

after the district distributed bonuses last December. He expressed strong trust in the educators and board members regarding the well-being of students, but challenged them to prove their financial stewardship. He called for accountability if the increase passes, that every dollar be tracked and tied to student achievement. He urged the public to engage constructively rather than through anger or blame.

Megan Gower, counselor at Iron Online, expressed support for Alternative Education programs that help non-traditional students graduate. She related her own experience as a parent, saying she chose to invest in her children's activities over personal entertainment, likening that to investing in alternative education to ensure long-term benefits for students and society. She warned that without supporting students now, the community might pay more later through issues like incarceration.

Simon Leland, community member, spoke against the tax increase saying many resident feel ignored and are protesting by withholding property taxes, as he is. He warned of growing public frustration, urged personal responsibility in education where parents take charge of their children's education, and criticized reliance on government solutions.

Carlos Cramer, community member, spoke against the tax increase and expressed frustration over rising costs and poor education outcomes. He blamed uncontrolled growth, poor planning, and rising density for straining public services, including schools. He urged the Board to stop overspending and resist further expansion.

Breanna Wall, registrar at Launch High School, emphasized the importance of alternative education. She stated that students need proper tools to succeed and that alternative programs provide a vital sense of belonging for those who don't fit the traditional mold. Supporting these programs benefits not just students but the entire community and future society.

President Johnson thanked everyone for their comments.

3. Business Administrator's Report

Facilities Director Hunter Shaheen provided an update on construction projects in the district. He reported that Parowan High School just received a certificate of occupancy and will open next Tuesday with a new lunchroom and gym space. The ribbon-cutting is scheduled for September 3rd.

East Elementary is ahead of schedule but facing delays due to discontinued window materials and some engineering issues. Asbestos abatement and utility work are planned for the summer to ensure the building is ready for the next school year, though some landscaping and playground work will continue afterward.

The Canyon View High School addition is underway with crane pad and tilt panel pours progressing, despite some rain delays.

The Transportation Facility plans and schematics are nearly complete, with bidding expected by winter.

Hunter reported that overall, projects are moving well, with some challenges being managed. Mrs. Christiansen asked him his opinion on the truth in taxation. Hunter emphasized the urgent needs of aging school buildings, noting that his team works tirelessly, even overnight, to prevent issues like flooding. He indicated that he supports the proposed tax increase, stating it's not frivolous but necessary to maintain and upgrade 70 year old facilities. President Johnson thanked Hunter for being fiscally responsible and being prepared to respond quickly to infrastructure failures.

3.4 Superintendent's Report

[CHS 2025-2026 Secondary Improvement Plan 2.pdf](#) 

[LHS School Improvement Plan 25-26.pdf](#) 

[PHS Improvement Plan 25-26.pdf](#) 

[SEA Goals 2025-26.pdf](#) 

[Iron Online Goals 25-26 Improvement Plan - Google Docs.pdf](#)



Principals from Launch High School, Parowan High School, Southwest Education Academy, and Iron Online presented their school goals.

5. Board Member Report

Vice-President Tullis reviewed the Board School Visits Schedule and reminded board members to focus on specific examples of positive behavior and academic achievement, and include that specific praise in their reports. The goal is to provide meaningful, uplifting feedback to teachers and schools. She also reminded board members if there is a scheduling conflict to please reach out and trade their school visit with another board member.

Mrs. Hill reported on the Children's Justice Center. She presented a statistics report showing a significant increase in youth services provided. This includes interviews, medical exams, and therapy. Mrs. Hill encouraged the Board to review the data. She reported she did not have the opportunity to attend the URSA Conference this year, but expressed continued dedication to that work.

6. In Focus Elementary Mental Health Curriculum

Tim Marriott, Student Services Coordinator, introduced a new social-emotional curriculum for elementary schools called In Focus. The curriculum is aimed at supporting counselors under the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) model. He explained that currently, counselors spend up to 45% of their time creating their own materials. In Focus provides a plug and play, K-12, research-based curriculum that teachers, social workers, or counselors can use, even in a counselor's absence. Amy Miner from In Focus delivered the curriculum presentation via Zoom.

4. ACTION ITEMS

1. Resolution Adopting Final Tax Rates
[2025 Proposed Tax Rate Adjustment Information Sheet \(1\).pdf](#) 
[SD 28 Additional Pub Ed Funding 8.25.25.docx](#) 
[SD 28 Public Ed Funding 8.25.25.pdf](#) 
[SD 28 WPU Value History 8.25.25.pdf](#) 

President Johnson expressed appreciation for local state legislators, noting that they promptly reached out to discuss some of the questions that came up in the last meeting. He introduced Senator Vickers and Representative Shipp to speak about state-level education issues and provide clarity. Senator Vickers expressed gratitude for the opportunity to speak. He praised Iron County School District for providing diverse educational opportunities like Launch and SUCCESS Academy, which benefited his own grandchildren. He acknowledged the concerns raised in previous meetings and clarified that he and Representative Shipp were there to provide information on state level education issues. He explained Utah's long standing Truth in Taxation policy and noted that many other states have since followed Utah's lead. He addressed the common criticism that Utah spends less per student than other states, pointing out that the state dedicates a high percentage of its total tax revenue to education and keeps administrative costs low. He commended the district for doing more with less and thanked the Board for their continued efforts. He provided an overview of education funding trends in Utah. The handouts were made available to the public and the link is attached to the minutes. He continued his remarks by detailing recent efforts by the Utah Legislature to improve education funding, particularly for teacher compensation and rural school support. Highlights included:

- Conscious legislative push in recent years to raise teacher pay
- Utah now leads the Intermountain West in starting teacher salaries
- The Teacher Salary Supplement was doubled to \$8,400 per teacher in FY24, from \$4,200
- In FY25, an additional \$1,000 supplement per teacher was added

Senator Vickers also mentioned several targeted funding programs such as At-Risk and Necessary Existent Small Schools (NESS). He explained school funding equalization and Truth in Taxation. To receive equalization aid, districts must levy at least 0.002 in property tax (20 increments). If the district voted and board levies generate less per student than

the state guarantee rate, the state makes up the difference. He also pointed out the change in the hold harmless period. Originally, districts had 5 years to meet the equalization levy requirement without losing state support. In 2025, HB2, the Public Education Appropriations bill, reduced this period to just one year. He admitted this change could be seen as the legislature being the bad guy, but explained the intent was to ensure local communities were meeting their fair share of funding responsibilities. Representative Shipp acknowledged the school board members are in a difficult position. He noted that while there may be some flexibility in timing, ultimately it's the Board's responsibility. He expressed appreciation for the Board's service and the hard work they do. President Johnson thanked the legislators for taking the time to participate in the meeting.

President Johnson turned the time over to Superintendent Hatch to discuss the impact of the decision tonight as it relates to schools and educational programs. Superintendent Hatch addressed the potential impact of reducing non-mandated programs that have been added over time to support students and families. He highlighted ongoing inflationary pressures, including the rising cost of goods and services, noting that curriculum expenses have more than doubled since 2015. He emphasized that the majority of the district's budget is allocated to salaries and benefits, and the district continues to experience growth. As of August 21, the district had 546 more students than the previous year, although that number is expected to decrease slightly by October. Superintendent Hatch also outlined the consequences of delaying action. He cautioned that postponing a tax increase would require the district to rely on one-time, non-recurring funds—comparable to using a tax refund to cover ongoing expenses. Delaying for three years could result in a 54% tax increase, compared to a 6.3% increase if action is taken now. The financial impact of waiting just one year is estimated at \$2.8 million, accounting for losses in both state and local funding.

The Board discussed the implications of the tax increase and the effect it would have now compared to waiting four years.

Mrs. Christiansen made a motion to adopt the final tax rates as presented. Mrs. Tullis seconded the motion.

President Johnson asked for further discussion from board members:

Mrs. Hill expressed strong personal support for teachers and students and indicated that if she were voting as a private citizen she would support the proposed increase. However, she also pointed out her duty to represent the broader community and shared concerns raised by a local veteran teacher. Mrs. Hill stressed that even if she disagrees with some of these views, perceptions matter and must be respected. Despite her belief in the value of the tax increase, she indicated she could not support it at this time given the current hardships many community members face.

Mr. Eddy cautioned the public against drawing conclusions from the raw, unaudited financial data found on websites like transparent.utah.gov. He pointed out the apparent deficits or surpluses may be misleading and could involve factors like general obligation bonds, which affect revenue over multiple years. He praised Business Administrator, Todd Hess, for being financially conservative, but advocated for using some one-time funds to delay or soften the impact of the tax increase for taxpayers. He stressed that maintaining the district's 20-increment tax rate is ultimately necessary to avoid insolvency. The tax increase is inevitable, whether now or in a few years.

President Johnson acknowledged the tax increase is unpopular, but said it's necessary to fulfill his duty to support safe, high-quality public education. He stated that community members consistently ask for safe schools, quality teachers, and strong academic outcomes, which are needs that require adequate funding. He pointed out the proposed funding is the bare minimum to sustain the district and avoid repeated small increases that burden taxpayers over time. He also expressed a desire to avoid taxpayer whiplash by delaying the increase for a future year.

Mr. Taylor voiced strong support for teachers and district staff. He shared frustration over the teachers shortage, noting thousands of unfilled positions across the state and urged people to witness firsthand the work teachers do. Mr. Taylor pointed out that though he is fiscally conservative, he supports the tax increase to fund needed school facilities and avoid leaving future boards to deal with a massive tax

increase due to inaction now.

Mrs. Ralphs expressed how difficult this decision has been. She noted she appreciates the extra time to reconsider the vote and has had meaningful conversations to ensure confidence in her decision. She recognized the financial strain on families, but also stressed the importance of maintaining school resources, supporting students and staff, and not cutting essential programs.

President Johnson thanked the Board for their comments.

4.2 Resolution Adopting Final Tax Rates and Budgets

[Resolution Adopting Final Tax Rates and Budgets - Certified Rates.pdf](#) 

[Resolution Adopting Final Tax Rates and Budgets - Proposed Rates.pdf](#) 

Motion to adopt the final tax rate as presented.

Moved by: Tiffiney Christiansen

Seconded by: Michelle Tullis

Aye Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis, Tiffiney Christiansen, Ben Johnson, and John Taylor

Nay Stephanie Hill and Tyrel Eddy

Motion Passes 5-2

AYE: Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis, Tiffiney Christiansen, Ben Johnson, John Taylor

NAY: Stephanie Hill, Tyrel Eddy

Motion Passes 5-2

4.3 Adoption of FY26 Budget

[FY25 Amended Budget & FY26 Tentative Budget with No Property Tax Increase.pdf](#) 

[FY25 Amended Budget & FY26 Tentative Budget with Property Tax Increase.pdf](#) 

Motion to adopt the fiscal year 26 budget as proposed with

the property tax increase.

Moved by: Megen Ralphs

Seconded by: Tiffiney Christiansen

Aye	Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis, Tiffiney Christiansen, Ben Johnson, and John Taylor
Nay	Stephanie Hill and Tyrel Eddy

Motion Passes 5-2

AYE: Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis, Tiffiney Christiansen, Ben Johnson, John Taylor

NAY: Stephanie Hill, Tyrel Eddy

Motion Passes 5-2

- 4.4 Approval of New Bank Accounts with SBSU for Launch High and Iron Online schools.
Motion to approve the new bank accounts with State Bank of Southern Utah for Launch High and Iron Online Schools.

Moved by: Stephanie Hill

Seconded by: Tiffiney Christiansen

Aye	Stephanie Hill, Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis, Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben Johnson, and John Taylor
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Motion Passes 7-0

- 4.5 Approval of Fund Balance Commitment
[Facilities Funding Proposal 8-19-25.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve the fund balance commitment proposal for the facilities funding.

Moved by: Tyrel Eddy

Seconded by: Michelle Tullis

Aye Stephanie Hill, Megan Ralphs, Michelle Tullis,
Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben
Johnson, and John Taylor

Motion Passes 7-0

4.6 Early Learning Plan

[ICSD Early Learning Plan 2025-26.pdf](#) 

Motion to adopt the ICSD Early Learning Plan as proposed.

Moved by: Stephanie Hill

Seconded by: Tiffiney Christiansen

Aye Stephanie Hill, Megan Ralphs, Michelle Tullis,
Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben
Johnson, and John Taylor

Motion Passes 7-0

4.7 TSSA Framework

[TSSA Framework 2025-26.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve the proposed TSSA district framework.

Moved by: Tiffiney Christiansen

Seconded by: Michelle Tullis

Aye Stephanie Hill, Megan Ralphs, Michelle Tullis,
Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben
Johnson, and John Taylor

Motion Passes 7-0

5. FIRST READING

5.1 Policy 335a ICSD Salary Supplement for Highly Needed
Educators

[335a ICSD Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators](#) 

5.2 Policy 428 Lunch Policy

[428 Copy of LUNCH POLICY](#) 

Motion to suspend the rules.

Moved by: Michelle Tullis

Seconded by: Tyrel Eddy

Aye Stephanie Hill, Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis,
Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben
Johnson, and John Taylor

Motion Passes 7-0

[428 Copy of LUNCH POLICY](#) 

Motion to approve Policy 428 Lunch Policy

Moved by: Michelle Tullis

Seconded by: Tyrel Eddy

Aye Stephanie Hill, Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis,
Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben
Johnson, and John Taylor

Motion Passes 7-0

- 5.3 Policy 614a Employee Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices

[614a Employee Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices](#)


- 5.4 Policy 801 Admissions and Attendance

[801 ADMISSIONS AND ATTENDANCE](#) 

- 5.5 Policy 826 Release of Students from School

[826 RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL](#) 

- 5.6 Policy 864 Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI) and Behavior Management

[864 Emergency Safety Interventions \(ESI\) and Behavior Management](#) 

6. SECOND READING

6.1 Policy 715 Student Activities - Dances

[715 Copy of STUDENT ACTIVITIES - DANCES](#) 

Motion to approve Policy 715 Student Activities - Dances

Moved by: Stephanie Hill

Seconded by: Tiffiney Christiansen

Aye Stephanie Hill, Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis,
Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben
Johnson, and John Taylor

Motion Passes 7-0

6.2 Policy 742 Attendance

[742 Copy of ATTENDANCE POLICY](#) 

Motion to table Policy 742 Attendance Policy until the next
regular meeting

Moved by: Tyrel Eddy

Seconded by: Stephanie Hill

Aye Stephanie Hill, Megen Ralphs, Michelle Tullis,
Tiffiney Christiansen, Tyrel Eddy, Ben
Johnson, and John Taylor

Motion Passes 7-0

7. CLOSED SESSION

7.1 Enter into Closed Session

No closed session was held.

H. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:23 p.m. President Johnson adjourned the meeting.

Board President

