

Granite School District
Board of Education Meeting
Tuesday, November 18, 2025

A meeting of the Board of Education of Granite School District convened in the Boardroom at the Granite Education Center, 2500 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah. President Nicole McDermott called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM, those in attendance:

Nicole McDermott	President
Kris Nguyen	Vice President
Connie Burgess	Board Member
Kim Chandler	Board Member
Julie Jackson	Board Member
Clarke Nelson	Board Member
Karyn Winder	Board Member

The following members of the administration were present:

Ben Horsley	Superintendent
Todd Hauber	Business Administrator
Dr. Mitch Nerdin	Chief of Staff
Leslie Bell	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Tyler Howe	Assistant Superintendent

Doug Larson, General Counsel, and Stacy Bushell, Executive Secretary, were in attendance.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Budget Update

Todd Hauber presented a budget update which covered a review of the tax commission decision in September to deny the tax rate certification exceeding certified tax rate. This creates a budget disruption of \$17 million to FY 26. The options for addressing the impact on the budget include actions to manage cash flow, utilize reserves, and make budget reductions. In addition to this disruption to the current budget, we anticipate State and Federal revenue reductions in excess of \$25 million over the next 3 years. This will require additional discussions and decisions about setting the tax rate next year and managing the budget in subsequent years.

Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Joan Bramble, Organizational Effectiveness director, and Michael Douglas, Student Assessment director gave a report on the strategic plan sharing data related to social skills and dispositions and talent development priorities. Boost school supports, and school plans connected to the strategic plan were included. School report card release is delayed this year; results will be available in January 2026.

TIME Project

Dr. Mitch Nerdin introduced the Time Invested for Meaningful Education (TIME) project which aims to extend time to expand learning. Increasing the number of school days by starting the school year in the summer will help to improve academic achievement. This extended school

year model will be piloted at an elementary school. Once a school is chosen, teachers will apply, families will be notified, and additional details will be planned for the 2026-2027 school year. Funding for the pilot program will potentially be provided through a legislative bill and Title I funds.

Board members expressed concerns about the pilot. Kim Chandler understands that studies on extended time show inconclusive results, it would allow less time for student's activities and time with their families, teachers are burned out by summer and may use more technology in their classrooms to manage students, there would be increased costs to implement the program in schools following the pilot, and it seems like a childcare tool. Karyn Winder expressed her concerns about logistics, requiring families who don't want to participate go to a neighboring school feels like a school closure, hoping for funding from the legislature isn't a good strategy, and the timeline is too short for the board to evaluate this proposal.

Superintendent Horsley said this program has been considered by leadership since Dr. Nye was with Granite. The pilot would not be forced on a school community that does not want it. The goal with this pilot and other district efforts is to improve quality instruction. The model supports families rather than trying to simply provide childcare. Many teachers work second jobs over the summer; by allowing teachers to opt in to this pilot we provide a way for them to earn additional income. We believe that concerns can be addressed, and this pilot has potential to be beneficial to at-risk students.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President McDermott said there is need for an executive session for the purpose of character and competence and called for a motion.

Motion: **I move we move to an Executive Session for the purpose of character and competence.**

Made by: Julie Jackson
Seconded by: Kim Chandler

Called for voice vote by President McDermott: Connie Burgess (yes), Kim Chandler (yes), Julie Jackson (yes), Nicole McDermott (yes), Clarke Nelson (yes), Kris Nguyen (yes), Karyn Winder (yes)

The executive session was held in Room B-217 at 6:17 p.m. Julie Jackson, Connie Burgess, Karyn Winder, Kris Nguyen, Kim Chandler, Clarke Nelson, Ben Horsley, and Nicole McDermott were in attendance.

Motion: **I move to adjourn executive session.**

Made by: Karyn Winder
Seconded by: Kris Nguyen

Called for vote: President McDermott
Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

The executive session ended at 6:49 p.m. and the attendees returned to the Board Room.

GENERAL BOARD MEETING

The Granite School District Board of Education reconvened at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom. President Nicole McDermott welcomed all in attendance for this session and called for a roll call of board members; all board members were present. President McDermott invited those representing organizations to introduce themselves:

PTA:	Liz Shellum and Amy Warner
GEA:	Michele Jones and Caren Burns
GAEOP:	Gayna Breeze and Sherry Anderson

Pledge of Allegiance: Tiffany Mulumba

Reverence: Magna Music Makers

GOOD NEWS MINUTE

Clarke Nelson attended a wonderful play, *Pinocchio Junior*, and the following morning he joined a Ruby Bridges Walk at Crestview Elementary.

Karen Winder helped at West Kearns with the Halloween parade. She also helped with Santa sacks at the Granite Education Foundation. Kearns junior held a literacy night where there was something for everyone. The Veteran's Day concert at the Tabernacle was fantastic.

Kris Nguyen was invited to the Magna STEAM night where students made and raced balloon cars. Pleasant Green's Not So Scary Halloween party was a fun event sponsored by the PTA. The haunted escape room at Cyprus High was a fabulous activity planned by a math teacher. The student planned Suicide Prevention Walk at Cyprus helped to raise awareness and share resources.

Connie Burgess attended *Mean Girls* at Taylorsville. She went to the Fremont buddy breakfast and was introduced to their community center. She thanked employees for the extra work that it takes to host parents and community members.

Kim Chandler enjoyed attending the monthly SBO meeting. These students are energetic and uplifting. At the Wright elementary veteran's program students sang songs to honor veterans who were seated on the stage. Then students lined up in the halls and cheered for the veterans as they exited.

Julie Jackson said it has been fun to be involved in the school musicals; she has attended many evenings in the past weeks. During the STEAM Night at Oakwood there was an activity to show what the pressure on Jupiter might feel like. She made literacy kits with the governor and met with Senator Curtis and Senator Blouin when they visited our schools.

Nicole McDermott said the Veterans Day concert was spectacular. The Army Band did not officially attend due to the federal government shutdown, but many individuals from the 23rd Army band and others donated their time for this event. She is attending musicals and plays. It was a great opportunity to join the governor to make the literacy kits for our families.

RECOGNITIONS

Academic All-State Athletes for Fall

Boys Cross Country: Andrew Poulson (Cyprus), Ethan Ostler, Spencer Bentley (Granger), Dung Ho (Hunter), Andrew Storheim (Olympus), Andrew Crouch, Davis Lloyd Howe, Johah Fearnley (Skyline), Kai Makowski (Taylorsville)

Girls Cross Country: Brynn Poulson, Lily Shawcroft (Cyprus), Paige Meaders (Granger), Evelyn Clayton, Sofia Jourdon (Olympus)

Football: Uha Malekamu (Cyprus), Brady West, Carson Stewart (Skyline)

Boys Golf: Sterling Peterson (Olympus)

Girls Soccer: Caroline Handy (Skyline)

Girls Tennis: Sunnie Ivins (Cottonwood), Lani Sturgeon, Tatum Castro (Hunter), Alice Pugsley, Ivy Zhao, Rain Xu (Skyline), Charity Christensen, Rachel Booth (Taylorsville)

Girls Volleyball: Abigail Salisbury (Cottonwood)

Granite Education Center and Granite Technical Institute 20-year Anniversary

In 2005 the Board of Education and administration of Granite School District negotiated and executed the purchase of the former FHP hospital which is now the Granite Education Center. They were recognized for their vision to acquire this facility which houses administrative offices, Woodrow Wilson Elementary, and the Granite Technical Institute. A video highlighting classes where thousands of students have received career training was shown. The honored guests were Julene Jolley, Connie Burgess, Sarah Meier, Judy Weeks, Henry Bertoch, Lynn Davidson, Stephen Ronnenkamp, and David Garrett.

GRANITE ELECTED OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION - none

PATRON PARTICIPATION - none

CONSENT ITEMS

Minutes October 7 & 21, 2025

Purchases as outlined in the agenda.

Change Orders as outlined in the agenda.

Personnel:

Employee Hires and Separations

Leaves of Absence

LEA Specific Licenses

Financial Reports:

Purchase Order Summary

Change Order Summary

Accounts Payable Pay Vouchers

Principals Cash Report

Monthly Budget Report

LAND Trust Amendments

Easement, Holladay City

Easement, Kearns Improvement District

Easements at 5 locations, Taylorsville-Bennion Improvement District

Motion: **I move that we accept the Consent Agenda.**

Made by: Kim Chandler

Seconded by: Kris Nguyen

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed 6, yes, 1 absent (Julie Jackson)

INFORMATION ITEMS

Student Enrollment Report

Steve Hogan, Planning and Boundaries Director, presented a report of enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year. The downward trend continues with 2,801 fewer students in October 2025 than October 2024. students. He shared data for individual schools and discussed the main factors contributing to the drop in enrollment.

Population Analysis Committee (PAC) Recommendation, First Reading

Steve Hogan reported that there has not been a change in the PAC recommendation for the Area 5 Study. President McDermott then read a statement regarding the Area 5 Study. While the board has confidence in the PAC they also have serious concerns about the recommendations. There are extenuating circumstances in this study and potential legislation that could impact our district. She asked Superintendent Horsley for an alternative to these recommendations.

Superintendent Horsley expressed his appreciation to the PAC for the work they conducted in this study. The board asked for potential alternatives to the current recommendation. In consultation with Director Hogan and the executive leadership team the following alternatives were identified with his recommendation being to suspend the study indefinitely. In a few years the board could hire a consultant to conduct a comprehensive district wide study.

1. Accept the current recommendation or some iteration of it.
2. Extend the study and hire an outside independent consultant to further study Area 5 in light of the nuances/challenges of this area.
3. Suspend the study indefinitely.

PUBLIC HEARING - PAC Recommendation

President McDermott stated the guidelines for public comments regarding the PAC recommendations. She then invited patrons to comment.

Kimberly Evason, Eastwood parent, spoke in favor of option 3 to suspend the study indefinitely. Danielle Housman, Morningside parent, spoke in favor of option 3.

Blake Behnke, Upland Terrace parent, voiced support for Upland elementary. He appreciates acknowledgment of the challenges of the study and recognized that enrollment is a real issue. He has concerns about adding special programs at Upland.

Jen Robinson, Morningside parent, urged the board to suspend the study and conduct a comprehensive study in the future.

Nastasya Mangone, Eastwood parent, in favor of option 3.

Vanessa Larson, Morningside parent, spoke in favor of keeping Morningside open.

Natalie Tingey, Morningside PTA president, supports the need for a boundary study in the area. She hoped for a plan that would benefit all students. The study has been difficult and caused damage within the community. She urged the board to develop a stronger process for the future. Sarah Safavi is concerned that the recommendation does not solve the challenges in the area. Morningside is thriving and attracts families from outside their boundary. She would like a solid 5–10-year plan to consider the future of the entire area.

Mary Anne Davies, Morningside parent, spoke in favor of keeping Morningside open. Parents will need to accept closures, but she asked the board to work with their community to create a vision to serve children.

Katharine Street, Morningside parent, asked the board to preserve Morningside's traditional track program, keep children, neighborhoods, and families together.

Logan Franco waved her time; her daughter addressed the board. She is in 5th grade and gave reasons why the board should not close Eastwood.

Chelsea Gauthier, Eastwood parent, shared letters from Emigration and Millcreek mayors and an area daycare. She asked the board to suspend the study.

Tara Thomas, Eastwood parent, please vote to suspend the study indefinitely.

Mary-Brook Townsend, Eastwood parent, appreciates the board asking for alternatives to the PAC proposal. She spoke against a merger of Eastwood and Oakridge.

Naomi Kisen, Eastwood parent, thanked the board for asking for other options. She then read state requirements for school closures she does not believe all legal requirements were met.

Charlie Thomas, Eastwood parent spoke against closing Eastwood. He questioned support for an IB path at Oakridge. He agrees with new proposal to suspend the study.

Sarah Plummer, Eastwood parent, spoke in favor of keeping Eastwood and suspending the study.

Andy May, Morningside parent, spoke in favor of keeping all programs and traditional students at Morningside.

Tim Ballantyne, Eastwood parent, asked the board to vote to suspend the study. He spoke in favor of keeping Eastwood open and promoting the school.

Stephanie Ballantyne, Eastwood parent, thanked the board for listening. She urged the board to help Eastwood grow and compete with other school options. She spoke in favor of option 3.

Sarah Harmon, Eastwood parent, concerned about an IB program in Area 5, it would be expensive and inequitable.

Jennifer Tomchok, Eastwood parent, is grateful to the board for asking for alternatives and supports option 3. She does not support further study. Parents will help with a plan for expansion. She shared a handout.

Colin Olsen lives in SSL and permits children to Eastwood. They chose Eastwood because of the school's reputation. The school offered essential support for his student.

Sunita Jennings, Eastwood parent, asked the board to suspend the study indefinitely. Supports turning their passion to supporting all students and the district as a whole.

Georgeann Petrogeorge, Eastwood parent, wants to channel this energy to increase their enrollment. She thanked Superintendent Horsley for listening and asked for a vote to suspend.

Jonathan Mangon gave time to students, Scarlet and Ellie who shared why they feel safe and like Eastwood. They asked the board to keep their school open.

Megan Medina thanked the board for hearing parents. She asked the board to suspend the study and make plans for growth.

Larry Gelwiz, grandparent, asked the board to vote for option 3. He thanked Superintendent Horsley and his team for their thoughtful approach and proposal to suspend this study.

Michele Jones, GEA President, GEA has confidence in the Granite's PAC process. She thanked the board for keeping students, educators and the community at the heart of their decisions. Tiffany Mulumba, Eastwood parent, supports the recommendation to suspend the study. Lilie-Claude Mulumba, student, likes the teachers at Eastwood does not want to go to another school.

Katie Dumke, Eastwood parent, thanked the board for taking feedback seriously. The PAC proposal didn't solve the problems of their area. She supports suspending the study.

Emily Brammer, Eastwood parent, thanked the board for caring and addressing their concerns. She urged the board to vote to suspend the study.

Zachary Book, Oakridge alumni, thanked the board for their efforts. He spoke in favor of Oakridge elementary. He hopes no schools in the area close.

Kyle Domire, Eastwood parent, shared his personal experience as an out of boundary student attending schools in this area.

Kate Bishop, Eastwood parent, urged the board to pause the PAC study indefinitely.

Rob Badger, Driggs parent, asked the board to suspend the study indefinitely or delay it until it can be conducted properly.

Havana Costa, Eastwood student, talked about reason she likes Eastwood and does not want to go to another school.

Ozzy Costa, Eastwood student, talked about things he likes about Eastwood and wants to keep Eastwood open.

Jenny Gelwix, Eastwood teacher, thanked the board for hearing them and offering another option.

Kate, Eastwood parent, shared her concerns about the notifications that were provided to families. She also questioned if the motions made in past meetings complied with State code.

Linda Book, Pediatrician at U of U, said Oakridge, it is an outstanding school and asked the board to keep Oakridge open.

Alex Takahashi, Morningside area resident, hopes his children will go Morningside. He asked the board to choose option 3.

Amy Warren, PTA and Armstrong parent, is excited about engagement. She knows the PAC works hard to listen to communities. West side schools feel like they are not heard, she asked the board to please continue to listen and make the right decisions for the entire district.

President McDermott concluded public hearing at 9:40 p.m.

ACTION ITEM

Board Decision: PAC Recommendation First Reading

Motion: I move to suspend the study indefinitely as a final action.

Made by: Karyn Winder

Seconded by: Kim Chandler

Board Discussion:

Julie Jackson read her comments:

Education in Utah

In the last 20 years, much has changed in education in Utah, and we feel those changes in Granite and in Holladay and Millcreek cities:

- We've had a decline in the birth rate of nearly 36% since 2008.
- We've had an increase in competition from charter, private, homeschool, and Utah Fits All—none of which are required to play by the same rules as public education, which puts us—and particularly marginalized kids—at a disadvantage.
- We've got a lack of affordable housing, particularly in our neighborhoods, which means less elementary age families can afford to live next door.

Evolution in our neighborhood schools:

We are especially feeling the impacts of this evolution in our Millcreek and Holladay schools.

- Last year, we lost a combined 15 teachers among the 10 schools in this study.
- We are seeing erratic class size and split classes. Last week I spoke to a group of students from Skyline who went to some of these schools and now volunteer in these classes. They told me powerfully, “No one should be ok with this.”
- Our teachers have more work, which means our kids get less individual attention.
- Our schools with less than 400 kids are losing kids 3X faster than the other schools in our area. Think about it—if your kid is in a class of 38, you might consider changing schools too.
- As schools lose students, they lose teachers and programs, which in turn, makes more students choose to leave. Quickly the school is in a spiral of decline.

This is what we are working to prevent.

Gratitude:

I recognize the work done by our entire community to respond to this evolution. Thank you to everyone for the work you've put into making sure education in our neighborhoods evolve in an effective and positive direction.

PAC's Recommendation:

This study has been an outlier because mid-study, I believe we began to see a shift in our beliefs about best practices.

- With ALC we need to study whether we want to expand or contract the program.
- With DLI we need to study whether it is most effective as a stand-alone program or in a traditional school.
- And we need to determine how is best to set up our neighborhood schools to thrive amidst declining and open enrollment—especially in Holladay and Millcreek where almost 40% of the kids in our schools do not live in the boundary.

I support the PAC's recommendation, but because of this evolving philosophy, I don't think they could make it comprehensive enough and under their recommendation, some of our great schools are still vulnerable to the spiral of low enrollment.

I want a Study

Because of this, I support an extended study of all of Area 5 in which we hire an independent agency to come in and give the board a recommendation on how we can set up our entire area for long-term success.

I want to be clear about my expectations of this study:

- I expect a thorough community engagement plan, but one that is completely different from what we have done in this study. I do not want 4-hour meetings with people at the microphone. My community is tired and if we are going to spend our time continuing to engage on this, we want our time effectively and efficiently spent.
- I expect a full report with data to back up recommendations.
- I expect board and district leaders to be completely distant from the process of getting a recommendation except to provide data.
- I expect the board and district to flesh out our vision for ALC, DLI, and traditional schools so that vision can be included in the recommendation. I also expect that we will provide information about effectiveness and lessons learned from past boundary changes and school closures.

I'd love to hear feedback from community members of things we should expect from this study that I have not yet considered.

Expectations:

I understand that some in my community may be breathing a sigh of relief right now. Others are open-mouthed, frustrated that we have to go through this for another year! Regardless of how you are feeling right now, I want to be sure we are all on the same page: this recommendation comes with risk. I have no idea what the independent study will recommend. Wouldn't it be great if they could find a way to set us up for success with no closures? I wouldn't count on it though. They could recommend 2, 3, 4 closures. This expansion is not a decision, NOT to close schools. It is a recognition that we need more time to get it right.

Our neighborhood is full of incredible kids. I want to give them all we've got to help them develop their talents and reach their potential. I think they are worth another year and an independent study.

Kim Chandler was uncertain about the closure recommendation many times through this process. It felt like we were trying to fix something that isn't broken.

Connie Burgess appreciates community involvement, it is important to put this off for awhile.

Kris Nguyen has learned a lot about our district. We are changing and our enrollment is declining. This is not the right timing for a closure. She hopes for an in-depth study in the near future.

Karyn Winder was concerned about the Eastwood closure because it was attempting to solve a problem that didn't exist for the community. Regarding the Morningside closure, there were too many moving parts. This direction came from the board asking Superintendent Horsley for other options. Next year she would like to evaluate the impacts of recently closed schools and use that information to inform future decisions.

Clarke Nelson has long been an advocate for more comprehensive studies across the entire district. He is firm in that belief, it is critical to our success, he supports suspending the study.

However, there are budget restraints in our state, other patrons come to our meetings, they no longer have students in our district and taxing is a burden for them.

Nicole McDermott appreciates those who reached out in good faith and contributed to productive conversations. She supports the PAC; this area has unique needs that we have not faced before. She asked parents at these schools to help the Board to help their communities where enrollment is too low. She encouraged parents to work together as a whole community and stop fighting with each other. Parents can support the board at the tax hearing next year by helping everyone understand the needs of public education. She supports suspending the study with the understanding that this area's issues still need to be addressed.

Superintendent Horsley is concerned about classrooms at these schools with too few or way too many students despite being allocated the same amount of resources as schools across the district. He will attend community council meetings to continue this conversation. The number one factor of school marketing is word of mouth, to help parents understand the value in our schools.

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

SECOND READING

Article V.C.1. Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment

Motion: I move to approve Article V.C.1. Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment for a second and final reading.

Made by: Karyn Winder

Seconded by: Kris Nguyen

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

SUPERINTENDENT and BOARD REPORTS

Superintendent Horsley reported that Olympus girls' soccer represented Granite well. Halloween was fun, he visited ten schools. The pie in his face at Hunter was not whip cream, but sport flavor shaving cream. There were over 2,000 visits to schools in the first quarter by district administrators. He and Dr. Nerdin visited three schools to observe special education interventions. It was remarkable, we have a privilege and honor to serve those students. The Day of the Dead celebration at Dos Mundos was an incredibly successful event for families. He attended *Pinocchio* at Crestview; the PTA volunteers have directed productions since 2017. Olympus town hall meeting was successful; there were good discussions. Superintendent Horsley recognized Todd Hauber and his team as they received the Association of School Business Officials International Meritorious Budget Award.

Clarke Nelson expressed his gratitude to the Superintendent, Business Administrator, and executive leadership team who are always responsive on any and all issues. They spend many hours in deep and detailed conversations; their commitment and work ethic is noticed.

Karyn Winder thanked Todd Hauber and his team for helping the board to oversee the budget, utilizing taxpayer dollars in the best way possible.

Kris Nguyen agreed that the Superintendent, Business Administrator, and the entire executive team are the best in the state. She appreciates board members for their engagement and efforts she thanked each of them for their specific contributions.

Connie Burgess said the deadline for master board certification is December 1st, training is online. She shared dates of USBA events and the conference coming up in January.

Kim Chadler attended the Parks and Recreation meeting; the county is working to develop their relationship with school districts to promote events and activities.

Julie Jackson reported that the District Community Council met last month on PBL and reviewed board policy. The evaluation committee sent surveys, and they are due. The board certification only took about an hour; she encouraged others to complete it.

Nicole McDermott said the calendar committee identified two very different calendar options which will be reviewed next month. The law and policy committee met they will wait on vehicle use standards to gather more information. They reviewed special education, student code of conduct, and graduation standards and requirements. Lastly the 8-hour task force continues to study the issue, they have a FAQ webpage, a letter requesting feedback was sent to administrators and focus groups will be meeting soon. Information from the task force will be shared with board members at a future study session.

ADJOURN

President Nicole McDermott adjourned the meeting at 10:43 p.m.

Note: A copy of related materials and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/> and <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Organization/2744>