

## Wasatch County School District Board of Education

Board Retreat Meeting Minutes

Date: October 10, 2025

Location: Zermatt Resort – Uri Room, 784 West Resort Drive, Midway, Utah

Time: 10:00 a.m.

### Call to Order & Roll Call

The Board Retreat was called to order by Board President Kim Dickerson at 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance:

Superintendent Dr. Garrick Peterson; Board Members Cory Holmes, Jake Collett, Board President - Kim Dickerson, Breanne Dedrickson, Brad Ehlert; Business Administrator Dr. Jason Watt; Stephanie Discher and Stacey Moore.

A. Semi-Annual Board Retreat - 10:00 a.m.

### 1. Team Collaboration

#### Welcome and Purpose of Retreat

President Dickerson welcomed participants and shared that the purpose of the retreat was to reconnect as a Board team, revisit foundational roles, and strengthen communication and trust. She emphasized this retreat as an opportunity to “restart,” reflect, and clarify “the why” behind the Board’s charge to serve students, staff, and the community.

#### Discussion: Dialogue vs. Debate

Facilitated by Superintendent Peterson

The Board discussed the differences between debate, discussion, and dialogue, exploring how each impacts communication and teamwork.

- Dialogue was described as a space to strengthen understanding and build community connectivity.
- True dialogue is “not about being right, but about honoring each other” and seeking to understand.
- Temporarily suspend judgment, reflect on their own positions, and listen critically with empathy.
- Board Member Collett expressed appreciation for this reflective work, noting the importance of focusing on relationships and understanding others’ backgrounds.
- Collective responsibility, emphasizing that once the Board moves forward, unity and support for the final decision are essential.

Board President Dickerson, distributed the book Leadership and Self-Deception: The Secret to Transforming Relationships & Unleashing Results by the Arbinger Institute, recommending it as a tool for continued reflection and dialogue.

### 2. Board Norms

Facilitated by Stephanie Discher

A group discussion on developing Board Norms that reflect trust, communication, accountability, and shared purpose.

1. Respect and Professionalism	2. Commitment and Purpose	3. Collective Responsibility and Accountability	4. Communication and Transparency
Assume good will	Always remember our “why” our students	Do what is right for all stakeholders	Recognize and verbalize strengths in others
Treat each other with respect	Focus on what is best for all students and not just individual opinions	Work collaboratively and hold one another accountable to commitments	Promote a growth mindset and productive struggle
Humans and their opinions matter	Eliminate what doesn’t add value	Celebrate success often	Listen to understand
Get to know each other and build relationships	Focus on students, policy, and board responsibilities	We will act, learn and adjust quickly	Listen intently, dialogue openly, make decisions and support collectively,

Possible "We Will" Statements to use as collective commitments and Board Norms:

**1. Respect and Professionalism**

We will foster a culture of respect by assuming goodwill, valuing each person's perspective, and building positive relationships.

**2. Commitment and Purpose**

We will stay grounded in our 'why' by keeping students at the center, focusing on what benefits all rather than individuals, and ensuring our work aligns with policy, board responsibilities, and priorities.

**3. Collective Responsibility and Accountability**

We will work together with integrity, holding ourselves accountable to shared commitments, celebrating successes, and adapting quickly to serve all stakeholders.

**4. Communication and Transparency**

We will engage in open, respectful dialogue by listening to understand, recognizing strengths, promoting growth, and supporting collective decisions.

Continue exercise to establish Board Norms around listening to understand, always remembering the "why," and maintaining a commitment to purpose.

**3. Effective Board & Superintendent Processes**

Guest Panel: Vern Henshaw and JoDee Sundberg

Guest facilitators JoDee Sundberg and Vern Henshaw provided insights from their experience with effective board governance:

- Trusting the Process: Board members should rely on established communication channels and avoid bypassing the superintendent.
- Role Clarity: Individual board members hold no authority outside of formal board action.
- Communication: Open dialogue between the Board and Superintendent is vital to building and maintaining trust.
- Governance vs. Management: The Superintendent manages daily operations, while the Board governs through policy, oversight, and collective decisions.

The Board discussed the importance of maintaining consistent communication and avoiding surprises in public meetings.

- Regular Coordination: Meetings between the Superintendent, Board President, and one Board Member were emphasized as a proactive way to address questions and priorities before public sessions.

- Avoiding Blindsides: Members discussed the term "blindsided" as situations where unexpected comments or opposition arise in meetings. Such instances can damage trust and teamwork.

JoDee guided an exercise on appropriate communication processes.

- When approached by parents or staff, board members should first refer them to the building-level principal and the board member should notify the superintendent, who will follow up and report back.
- Avoiding "taking matters into one's own hands."
- Board unity and respect for the process protect the district from legal or reputational issues.

Both shared experiences illustrate the importance of board unity, humility, and respect for roles.

- JoDee: "As an individual board member, you have no authority to tell an employee what to do—your authority comes through the Board as a whole."

- Vern: Reinforced that trust, communication, and openness are the foundation of effective governance. "Reinforcing norms keeps the team aligned and accountable."

- They cautioned against holding meetings without the superintendent, reminding members that doing so can erode trust.

**B. Special Study Session - 1:00 p.m.****Members present**

Board President, Kim Dickerson

Board Vice President, Cory Holmes

Board Member, Jake Collett  
Board Member, Breanne Dedrickson  
Board Member, Brad Ehlert

Superintendent, Dr. Garrick Peterson  
Business Administrator, Dr. Jason Watt

## 1. Boundary Discussion

The Board will hold this special study session to continue its work on determining boundary adjustments for the 2025–2026 school year in preparation for the opening of Deer Creek High School.

*Additionally, a Public Hearing regarding the Proposed School Boundary Changes for 2026–2027 will be held on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.*

1. *Boundary changes affecting Timpanogos Middle School, Rocky Mountain Middle School, and Wasatch High School for the 2026-2027 school year, resulting from the opening of Deer Creek High School (grades 9–12).*
2. *Opportunity for public comment regarding the proposed boundary changes.*
3. *Scenarios for proposal can be found here <https://wasatch.edu/blog/high-school-boundaries-2025/>.*

**Superintendent Dr. Garrick Peterson** opened the discussion by explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to review additional boundary configurations requested by the Board, referred to as **Scenarios G and H**, along with updated demographic data extending through the elementary schools to project long-term balance and growth trends.

### Boundary Scenarios Reviewed

**Director of Student Services Dr. Eric Campbell** presented updated maps and data for **Boundary Scenarios G and H**, comparing them with earlier versions (**D and E**).

- **Scenario G** uses **River Road/Highway 32** as a general dividing line, including neighborhoods that empty onto or can be accessed via Highway 32. This adjustment considers future developments along that corridor.
- **Scenario H** shifts the boundary line further south near **Coyote Lane and Coyote Parkway**, adjusting for new housing growth and aiming to keep neighborhoods more intact while balancing student enrollment.

Dr. Campbell explained that both scenarios begin with similar enrollment projections but diverge slightly over five years as new developments fill in. Scenario H showed more even long-term balance between schools, while Scenario D represented the existing JR Smith boundary line.

### Discussion Highlights

**Board Members Breanne Dedrickson, Jake Collett, and Cory Holmes** led a detailed discussion of the maps and demographic implications:

- **Enrollment and Development:** Board members noted rapid growth in neighborhoods along Center Creek, Kimball Ranch, and Sawmill, emphasizing the need to anticipate future yields from new housing developments.
- **Equity Considerations:** Mr. Collett raised concerns about discrepancies in **free and reduced lunch percentages** between Deer Creek and Wasatch High Schools, noting a roughly **10-point variance**. Dr. Campbell explained that such differences can result from lower reporting rates among high school students and are not expected to significantly affect academic balance.
- **Middle School Balance:** Ms. Dedrickson highlighted parent feedback from the recent **Wasatch Parent Network meeting**, stressing that middle school boundaries may have a greater impact on families since younger students cannot transport themselves, and thus boundary equity at the middle level is particularly important.
- **Neighborhood Integrity:** Mr. Holmes and Ms. Dedrickson both noted that Scenario H appears to **keep neighborhoods more cohesive**, addressing concerns raised in community meetings about splitting developments.

### Demographic and Title I Context

Dr. Campbell and **Business Administrator Dr. Jason Watt** reviewed demographic data related to **free and reduced lunch, diversity, and ELL populations**. They explained that a variance of around **10% or less** between schools is not considered significant, and none of the proposed boundaries would likely create major imbalances.

The district's **average free and reduced lunch rate** remains in the **low 30% range**, with **Heber Valley Elementary** and **Daniels Canyon Elementary** eligible for **Title I designation**. Dr. Peterson noted that the district uses Title I funds strategically to support multiple schools and ensure equitable access to resources, even though overall poverty levels are far below those seen in larger urban districts.

### Survey Feedback

Dr. Peterson and **Director of Assessment Brett Zabel** presented results from two recent surveys designed to gauge **community and student preferences** for high school attendance and potential school choice behavior:

- **Parent Survey:** 772 responses (approx. 10% participation) indicated strong preference patterns by region. For example, in the **Daniels Canyon boundary**, 75% of families preferred **Wasatch High**, while only 3% preferred **Deer Creek**, with the remainder undecided or expressing no preference.
- **Student Survey:** Over 1,100 responses were received from current **freshmen through juniors**. Dr. Peterson noted that the top three factors influencing student choice were **favorite teachers, coaches, and peer groups**.
- **Choice Implications:** Board members discussed how the expected exercise of **open enrollment** ("school choice") could shift enrollments after boundaries are finalized, particularly as some Midway and Sawmill families expressed intent to attend Wasatch High regardless of boundaries.

#### **Key Takeaways**

- **Scenario H** emerged as the most balanced configuration for both high school and middle school populations, while **Scenario G** provided a comparable alternative with slightly higher initial enrollment at Deer Creek.
- **Equity metrics** across scenarios remained within acceptable ranges, with no scenario resulting in disproportionate socioeconomic concentration.
- **Future development and school choice behavior** remain the greatest variables affecting final enrollment balance.
- The **Board expressed appreciation** for the extensive data and modeling, noting the complexity of balancing growth, demographics, transportation, and community identity.

## **2. Adjournment**

### **Action, Procedural: 1. Adjourn Meeting**

Motion by Brad Ehlert, second by Breanne Dedrickson

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Cory Holmes, Kimberly Dickerson, Brad Ehlert, Breanne Dedrickson, Jake Collett