



**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Washington County School District**  
**121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah**  
**December 8, 2025**  
**4:30 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, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Susan Harrah, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Student Services Director Brad Christensen.*

*Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

Reverence by Executive Director Wade Jensen.

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:30 p.m. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

*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, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Susan Harrah, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, Student Services Director Brad Christensen, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Property and Personnel Items**

Property, legal, personnel items.

**Board Member Hammer presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 2:22 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING**

There were no items discussed.

**WORK SESSION**

**Board PLC Training – Steve Gregoire**

Steve Gregoire shared the collaboration results of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teams at Three Falls Elementary and Desert Canyons Elementary. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade team at Three Falls Elementary has been together for three years. Over that time, they have consistently improved in proficiency on the RISE test. The principal shared that collaboration helps them align, support, and strengthen learning for all. The Desert Canyons Elementary 4<sup>th</sup> grade team has been together for two years. Desert Canyons has also increased proficiency on RISE. He shared the four PLC questions. The teachers shared answers to the questions that helped them increase their proficiency scores. To help students know and be able to do the teachers

said they are being very intentional on what they are teaching, setting essential standards and learning targets and focusing on essential standards. To know if the students learned it the teachers make sure the assessments are aligned with RISE to check for understanding on things that are in the standards that the students will be tested on, they use learning targets to track learning and progress so students know where they are at and what they need to learn. If students don't learn it, the teachers will identify struggling students and intervene with students who haven't mastered the skill. Teachers said they are extending for student who have already mastered the content. Steve Gregoire said this shows a level implementation in the schools that is exciting to see. Teachers are working together as a team and are asking the right questions. The data shows it is paying off for them.

### **Insurance Premiums for Part-time 30 to 39.9 Hour Employees – Tammara Robinson**

Tammara Robinson shared proposed changes to the premiums for part-time 30-39.9 hour employees as discussed with the Insurance Committee. Part-time employees have always had to pay a percentage of the premium for their insurance. In 2017 it was changed and the full-time employees were charged premiums as well. With the changes made last year, the burden has grown for the part-time employees as they not only have the premium that the full-time employees have, but they also have the 12.5% or 25% for the other amount of the premium. She shared the cost for full-time and part-time employees. The part-time employees are the lowest paid employees and are paying a larger amount for premiums. Many of the part-time employees are not just working for insurance. They are not the highest utilizers and many of them don't have the option to get more hours. In Policy 1200, under section 3.2.7, it talks about insurance and states that employees who are less than full time must pay a portion of the premium but does not have a set amount. The formula was created many years ago. The Insurance Committee is asking the Board for approval to change the formula. She shared the amounts the employees would pay on the traditional and high-deductible plans. It would just be based on a flat percentage for those employees and would help to ease the burden for them. The cost to the District would be about \$115,000 a year. She would like to make this effective sooner than the enrollment period to allow employees who have turned down the insurance to consider enrolling. Utilization has been good so far this year.

### **2026-2027 Calendar Change – Rusty Taylor**

Rusty Taylor explained a proposed change to the 2026-2027 calendar. Fall Break is a week earlier than it has been and is not at the quarter. There is concern that the calendar has already been published.

### **2027-2028 Calendar – Rusty Taylor and Steve Gregoire**

Rusty Taylor shared the proposed calendar for the 2027-2028 school year. Superintendent Richard Holmes said there are no 990-hour rules currently, but they do feel it will come back. There is flexibility on the 180-day rule because of the prep days. Rusty Taylor said the calendar starts the same as we started this year. Craig Seegmiller feels that one of the best things the District ever did was to end second quarter before Christmas. He feels we should keep that in place even if it means starting earlier in August than we like. Craig Hammer explained that the District has had to go backward and start at the end of the calendar and go to the beginning to put in the days and hours. He mentioned that many of the northern districts want to stop going into June with their calendar. Rusty Taylor said the first day of school would be August 12<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter would end on October 13<sup>th</sup> with 44 days. The first quarter would have 44 days, the second quarter would have 42 days, and both third and fourth quarters would have 47 days to get to 180 days. All of the quarters end right before a break. Heidi Gunn asked about the prep day before Spring Break. Superintendent Richard Holmes said the feedback received was to not always have teacher prep days on the Monday after a break. Rusty Taylor said next year will be the first experiment where we did it before the break. We also did it next year because Easter is just a week after. In secondary schools, the Friday instruction tends to be a little bit less effective than a Monday, so secondary teachers would rather have a Friday disturbed than a Monday. They also felt it is easier because Friday is a short day. Brent Bills pointed out that the Easter Break is only one day and a day was placed in April to give a break between Easter and the end of school. Rusty Taylor reviewed the proposed calendar dates.

### **DLI Update – Superintendent Richard Holmes and Brooke Porter**

Superintendent Richard Holmes and Brooke Porter shared a proposed administrative letter for DLI guidance. Brooke Porter said that some of the biggest issues are in secondary as the numbers were

getting smaller. She wants to maintain the fidelity of the program and keep it sustainable. The fees and things like that get a little tricky. She reviewed the guidelines for enrollment and sustainability in the proposed administrative letter. There are currently 19 schools with Dual Immersion programs from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grades. It is a non-discriminatory general education program. All students are allowed to be in the program. The goal of the program is for students to be biliterate and to become culturally aware and be global citizens and be aware of what is happening throughout the world. The Dual Immersion program enrollment is available for all first-grade students at the 11 elementary schools offering programs regardless of the student's language background. In our District, programs are available for Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish. Enrollment in the Dual Immersion program is based on availability. She has tried to start first grade with two classes at 30 each. Thirty students may sound like a lot, but if they don't start with a higher enrollment the numbers drop too much with students moving out of the program and by the time they get into the secondary schools, the numbers can't support a program. Students can be added to the first-grade program up until December of the second grade if space is available. Brooke Porter mentioned that some of the unlisted criteria set by the District is that consideration for a program is given to in-boundary students first. Next, they look at out of boundary families who have other students already attending the school so families are not separated. They have set up lottery system set up for parents interested in signing their child up for Dual Immersion. The sign up begins in December for the following year. Currently there are 472 applicants that have signed up for the 11 elementary schools. There will be some schools who have more sign up than space available and some who will have less. When filling out the application they are asked to list their first and second choice school. Some students that maybe didn't get their first choice may have the option to go to their second-choice school. If they don't get selected in the application lottery they can be put on a wait list to be contacted if an opening becomes available as the year starts. They also try to balance out the programs with boys and girls and native speakers and non-native speakers where applicable. They want to make sure to give everyone an equal opportunities to be included. She has found that the hardest transition has been going from 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Sixth grade has a completely different schedule which rocks those students' world, plus they have Dual Immersion on top of it. Four of their six classes are content classes and then two of them are supposed to be Dual Immersion. She is really trying to strengthen that program and is making sure to look at the 5<sup>th</sup> graders going into 6<sup>th</sup> grade so that the right numbers are there to sustain the program. They do need a minimum of 25 students enrolled in a cohort when they go into 6<sup>th</sup> grade. If they don't have the numbers they will need to look at different models such as a split grade level or hybrid course. She will be checking enrollment every year and if after three years there is a declining enrollment, she will start the sun setting process of the program at the school. Brooke Porter said that moving forward, the District will not be adding any additional languages. If we add Dual Immersion to any new cone sites such as Pine View or Enterprise, they will only have one language. She mentioned that as in Utah Code, families will be notified by the District no later than August 31 if the program will not continue into the next school year similar to boundary changes. Brooke Porter said that we have one of the strongest Dual Immersion programs in Utah. If the program will not continue, students will be provided guidance on alternative educational options such as Utah Online or courses through Utah Tech University. Transportation to out-of-boundary locations will not be provided. She said they are asking parents for commitment to stay in the program through 9<sup>th</sup> grade when students sign up in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. They would then move into the bridge program in high school. She shared that this coming school year, students who start the program in 1<sup>st</sup> grade are being asked to follow their feeder schools through high school. This will help with projected enrollments for the program. The expectations have been communicated to parents and they do sign a commitment form each year reminding them of the program requirements. She said there will be an annual review assessing retention, achievement, and overall program viability and adjustments will be made as needed. She has also defined cohort for the schools and target languages. The Board briefly discussed the difficulty of the Chinese program and rural districts moving to a four-day week.

#### **Administrative Update – Superintendent Richard Holmes**

Superintendent Richard Holmes shared a list of candidates for the Principal Pool. He feels this is one of the strongest pools we have had. Burke Staheli said the people in our District know how to read and look at data. There were some really good data interview questions and it was so evident. Thirty-nine candidates were interviewed and narrowed it down to twenty-four. Superintendent Richard Holmes said

those in the pool will be interviewed each year even though they are still in the pool. The pool does not need to be a certain size. There were a couple of individuals who did not make the pool. The District administration has already made contact and is working with them. Superintendent Richard Holmes shared the process for principal position openings.

### **Review Action and Discussion Items**

Nate Esplin reviewed the proposed boundary changes for Desert Canyons Elementary, Bloomington Elementary, Little Valley Elementary, and South Mesa Elementary. He did have a few phone calls asking about how many students would be moved to Bloomington Elementary and Little Valley. There was only one parent who came to the meeting at Desert Canyons Elementary and he was able to answer her questions. Desert Canyons Elementary is still really big. Nate Esplin mentioned that both of the principals came to the parent meeting at Desert Canyons and did a great job talking about their schools. Steve Gregoire mentioned that Principal Susan Moore at Bloomington Elementary is working on an event to welcome those kids to her school.

Darin Thomas briefly reported on the insurance renewal timeline.

Rusty Taylor reported that Policy 9100 is a focus graduation pathway that allows kids to get credit through Southwest Adult High if they take and pass the GED. It would go towards their diploma. It has been out for the 30-day comment period. Craig Hammer said this is a good move to help kids graduate. Wade Jensen reported on the proposed changes to Policy 1200 that would give the high school librarians nine extra contract days. The middle and intermediate librarians would get five extra days. There have not been any comments on the proposed changes.

Brent Bills reported on the proposed changes to Policy 0005 which states the URS criteria for the Board, the Superintendent, and the Business Administrator and who gets it. The policy says that the Board is exempt and does not get URS but the superintendent and business administrator do get URS benefits. He said we need to add a line for the legal counsel as it is a position appointed by the board. We need to add a line that the legal counsel is at-will and is not under URS. He said it does not require 30-day notice as the Board has already approved the contract and this is just changing the policy to comply with the contract. It was mentioned that we would need to remember to change it if the District ever hires full-time legal counsel.

The 2026-2027 Calendar changes is also an action item for approval.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD**

### **Board Committee Discussions**

Craig Seemiller briefly reported on the Audit Committee. Brent Bills said the auditor is out visiting the high schools and will be spending time with Laura Belnap and the online school to look at what the impact is of online classes to our high schools and high school staffing. Craig Seegmiller said there has been a lot of talk throughout the District about online, so they are trying to get some facts.

LaRene Cox will have a meeting with Dixie Technical College on Wednesday. She reported on Water Canyon and feels it is moving along. They think they have found the right-of-way and may not have to do the extensive work with the BLM. They found a pipe that is already there along the side of the road and under sections of the road. They may get the right-of-way on the other side of the road instead of the right-of-way from the people on the south side. She is going to get more information. The people will have to be metered and are prepared for that. They have been calling the city on that.

Burke Staheli reported on the Utah High School Activities Association. He was contacted by Principal McKeehan at Hurricane trying to schedule football. He explained the situation with a new school in Wasatch County that wants to play Grantsville, which would leave Hurricane High without a game. They will be looking at actual registration numbers and decide on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Next year they will look at realignment in the spring. They are looking to get ahead of legislation on sports stuff. They are going to try to add an additional week moratorium designated by the school or school district. There is currently a moratorium over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. There is someone on the legislature who is worried about kids playing too much, overexposure, and having too much pressure if you don't go to camp that you won't make the team. It is kind of tough as parents want their kids to make the team. Burke Staheli also reported on the FCAOG. They were affected by the government shut down but are back up again. Craig Hammer mentioned that Katie Hall would like a moratorium at the end of each sport. He said the court needs to decide if the UHSAA is a state agency or not. There is no funding, but they keep saying that the

employees at UHSAA are on the state retirement, so that makes them a state agency. There are all sorts of people on state retirement, but they don't legislate those people. He shared an example out of Louisiana. He feels if it is a state agency then they need to fund it and take the pressure off all the schools. The Board talked about the UHSAA organization and revenue. Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned that they are thinking of pushing the appeals process to the state board. Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned that Coach David Holt was a state distinguished service award winner from the UHSAA. There will be a recognition banquet in January.

Ron Wade reported on the Healthy Dixie Council. He said their budgets are around \$15,000 a year. They do what they can with very little. They are all good people and have representatives from each city and other entities. They chat a lot mainly about bicycles. They do a walk/bike to school activity with various schools. There was one that happened recently at Bloomington Hills and they were disappointed that it wasn't more supported. Nate Esplin wasn't sure why as generally there is a lot of activity for those campaigns and the kids love it. Ron Wade said the one he attended over at Riverside was huge. Healthy Dixie was just disappointed that although it was far better than it was 3-4 years ago, it was less than Riverside and everywhere else. Craig Seegmiller said they do have a little clout as they have helped get bike lanes. They are doing a lot of good things. He mentioned that on south Main St. by Denny's they were able to eliminate a lane with multiple crashes and put on a bike lane. Ron Wade said they are very concerned about schools and our interaction with our children. They talk more about that than anything so that is refreshing and positive. David Stirland suggested doing whatever can be done to foster good health in schools would be great. Ron Wade said city, schools, and recreational safety is what they are all about.

Craig Hammer is part of the Audit Committee and part of the Water Company.

Heidi Gunn reported that the Foundation has the Giving Machines at the mall again. It is a great opportunity to support the kids of Washington County through those donations. She mentioned that there is a JLC Meeting on Thursday this week. They have several senators and representatives lined up to be at the meeting to talk about their bills. They also had representatives at the meeting in October and it was nice to hear from them and hear about their bills. They present their bill and listen to input and are open to suggestions which was really nice. Heidi Gunn mentioned she has a USBA Meeting on Friday and they will be talking about the upcoming bills.

Brent Bills mentioned that the Board shirts should be here right after Christmas Break. The Board should be able to wear them to the USBA Conference. Craig Seegmiller asked about the Master Board Award. Heidi Gunn said it has changed again this year. They have been going back and forth about what they will be giving out. They talked giving out plaques to take back and hang up, which our District has received every year. They also talked about giving out pins for those who earn it to wear or put on a bag to show you are certified. Craig Seegmiller said it has collectively been done by the whole board. The Board talked about some of the requirements and problems with the program. Heidi Gunn will let the Board know what is decided. Heidi Gunn reported on the meeting with Representative Neil Walters. She thought it was a great meeting and felt what Rusty Taylor presented was what he needed. Rusty Taylor briefly reported on the information he shared about attendance-based and learner-based education, and how to incorporate online learning into the whole process. It was a great discussion and he liked what was said. Some of the legislators are writing a bill. Superintendent Richard Holmes said the challenge that they will come face-to-face with, and Representative Walters acknowledged, is if they come out at really tighten attendance, students will go from brick-and-mortar to online as they don't want that accountability piece. They like that freedom and flexibility. They don't want to take assessments. They just want to go and do their class and be done. He agrees and thinks that is very concerning and problematic to go from giving parents the choice to do whatever they want and now go the other way. He mentioned there are a couple of attendance bills with one focused on brick and mortar. It's the online piece that they don't know how to handle in terms of attendance and accountability. He feels there could still be problems with the online driven by dollars and vendors. Representative Walters knows it could be a really challenging battle to come in and do some really tight attendance for online. He is trying to walk a fine line and find a bill that he can support that will articulate good attendance and accountability for brick and mortar and online. Some of the things we have heard about online about are the things he is hearing. It was a great meeting and we were able to give him some really good input. Superintendent Richard Holmes said there will be an assessment bill coming, an attendance bill, there are concerns with

math, literacy, accountability, parent rights, and education choice. Brent Bills said there will also be bills on referendums on boards and taxation.

Superintendent Richard Holmes reported on his USSA Meeting and said that enrollment statewide is declining and will decline for the next 10 years before it begins to go up again. The auditor said it is a childbearing issue with families having less kids. There are also more options that are pulling kids out of public education. We used to be around 95-96% of the students in Utah attending public education.

Currently we are down to about 91-92% attending public education. The new options such as home school, UFA, and charter schools have shown growth. Some of that growth is partly because of online with those options. The declining enrollment is starting in the lower grades where they are seeing lower numbers and is very consistent with the numbers that we are seeing. The state anticipates that 2035 will be the turning point, but that could change. Things could change dramatically in the next five years that would bring people here. We do have some students going to home school and the UFA Scholarship.

Heidi Gunn mentioned in her meeting she had heard about accountability of those. Superintendent Richard Holmes said that the state auditors are showing us as being 1400 students less in 2026-2027. Brent Bills said we are actually down 1500-1600 student but 1200 of those are online. Laura Belnap said 600 were in elementary and went to get the UFA money through private schools and 300 were in the high school and they limited the full-time students because they were behind in credits. Enrollment has gone down in the last five years but in their statewide online education program they continue to grow exponentially. It has never declined and has had continual growth. They started this year with more than 3000 new students in their statewide online education program which are students out of our district. They usually double that number in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. They will probably be 6000 more courses in the Spring that are not in our District. There are about 250 full-time elementary students from Washington County School District. In the high school they count by courses as they pick and choose their courses. She said there are about 5200 courses. Brent Bills said last year the online elementary program had 2730 full-time students. This year they have 1802. The secondary school has dropped just over 200 kids. Laura Belnap reported on some of the changes they have made in the secondary school. They have also changed some of the processes such as requiring student to do video submissions for their work so they know it is authentic work. They have also put in Honor Lock for testing. She said last year they graduated 384 full-time students from Washington County.

The Board discussed plans for the USBA Conference.

Darin Thomas mentioned an HRA sick day conversion approval for an employee moving who has applied for the conversion. The cost would be about \$900.

## **ITEMS FOR BOARD REVIEW**

1. Enrollment
2. Safe Schools
3. GRAMA Requests
4. Department Reports

*A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Washington County School District was held after due, legal, and timely notice being given to all members and interested parties. Board President David Stirland called the meeting to order and welcomed all visitors. Board members present were Craig Seegmiller, LaRene Cox, Burke Staheli, Ron Wade, and Heidi Gunn. Board Member Craig Hammer was excused. Staff members present were Superintendent Richard Holmes and Business Administrator Brent Bills.*

## **OPEN MEETING – 4:30 p.m.**

**Reverence by Member Hammer**

**Welcome – Board President Stirland**

**Pledge of Allegiance by Member Wade**

## **PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGE**

**The Washington County School District is proposing a boundary change between Desert Canyons Elementary, Bloomington Elementary, Little Valley Elementary, and South Mesa Elementary. Proposed Boundary Changes:**

- **Desert Color Area:** Students living in the Desert Color area south of the Southern Parkway to the Arizona border, and east of I-15 to the River Road on/off-ramp—would attend **Bloomington Elementary School** beginning in August 2026.
- **Southern View and South Desert Neighborhoods:** Students residing in the Southern View and South Desert neighborhoods in the area between Lansky Drive and Weehawken Lane on the west and Hamilton Drive on the east, extending south to the Southern Parkway—would attend **Little Valley Elementary School** beginning in August 2026.
- **Undeveloped Area East of Hamilton Drive:** The undeveloped area east of Hamilton Drive, north of the Southern Parkway to 4150 South, and west of Desert Canyons Parkway and the airport, is currently zoned for Desert Canyons Elementary, and Little Valley Elementary. The proposal would rezone this area to **Little Valley Elementary School** beginning in August 2026.

**The Washington County Board of Education will hold a Boundary Hearing on Monday, December 8, 2025 at 4:35 p.m. to receive public comment on the proposed boundary changes.**

*Maps of the proposed boundary considerations are available on the Washington County School District website <https://www.washk12.org/transportation/boundaries-and-routes/>.*

There were no public comments given on the proposed boundary changes.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Minutes
  - a. November 17, 2025 Meeting of the Board of Education
2. Financial Report
3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items
4. Bloomington Elementary TSSA Plan Change
5. Desert Canyons Elementary TSSA Plan Change

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items numbered 1-5.**

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

## **WHAT'S RIGHT IN WCSD SCHOOLS**

### **Diamond Valley Elementary – Principal Travis Wilstead**

Principal Travis Wilstead and Learning Coach Yvonne Fordham shared some of the things that are right at Diamond Valley Elementary. Yvonne Fordham invited the Board to take the beautiful drive up the hill to their school. The school motto this year is, “Dream Big, Work Hard, and Win Together.” Some of the programs at the school including an advanced learning or gifted and talented program, they are a Platinum STEAM School, they have Meet the Masters for their art program, they are a Spanish Dual Immersion school, and they were one of the schools that did Digital Technology and Learning and still continue those skills with their teachers. They are one of two schools to have the Advance Learning Program along with Riverside Elementary. In 1<sup>st</sup> grade they have the High Ability Reader Program and in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade they test and do the Advance Learning Program with the increased rigor, depth, and complexity. They have a specialized curriculum, William and Mary and Caesars English, for English Language Arts. They have an emphasis on the student’s social emotional needs and enrichment opportunities along with collaboration with peers that are alike, the ALP students. Principal Travis Wilstead said one of the most unique things is that they are Dual Immersion Spanish school and an ALP school and incredibly small. They have three teachers per grade level. One teaches English/DLI to 30 students in the morning and 25 in the afternoon, one teacher teachers ALP to 25 students in the morning and 30 in the afternoon, and one teacher is the traditional teacher so they have one teacher per stand in each grade level. They are a designated STEM Platinum School which isn’t a ranking given out easily. They are due to apply again and will be getting that back together. STEAM Education benefits all of the students. All of the students participate in these activities. The teachers integrate the subjects on a regular basis so it doesn’t only get taught in isolation. It motivates the students. One of Dr. Yost’s favorite things is the STEAM exploration classes on Friday. Dr. Yost came up with that to encourage the kids to attend on Friday. In addition to that, they have a dedicated paraprofessional Art Specialist and use the Meet the Masters curriculum. She loves ceramics and has taught the kids how to do it with wheels. She started by modeling how for them and then literally put her hand on theirs while trying to get them to balance the clay in the center of the wheel. The Tilted Kiln gave them some glaze and let the projects be

fired in their facility. It was a fun experience for the students. They also have a partnership with Rocky Vista University where 5<sup>th</sup> grade students can apply to go to the university and study medical skills. They gave the kids scenarios and the kids had to diagnose what was happening based on the scenario. It was a lot of fun and definitely a worthwhile experience. One thing that has been a tradition at Diamond Valley Elementary is the extracurricular activities including a virtual talent show. Rather than have a talent show hosted at the school, the kids turn in videos of their talent and then members of the PTO put it together and post it on YouTube with a link for the parents. That has been a fun tradition. The enrollment at Diamond Valley is 350 students. There are some real strong programs and practices in place at Diamond Valley Elementary. He said it has been fun to watch the kids speak a lot in Spanish even out on the playground.

### **Hurricane Middle School – Principal Shaun Jaggi**

Principal Shaun Jaggi and Vice Principal Jaron Tate shared what is right at Hurricane Middle School. Principal Shaun Jaggi shared that he has a great faculty and he is proud to be part of the team and they truly love their kids. He shared their growth scores, some of the best in the District and the state. For the end of level test scores: In 8<sup>th</sup> grade science the District average was 49%, the state was 50% and HMS was 52%. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade science the District score was 62%, the state was 50% and HMS was 64%. In Language Arts the District score was 56%, the state was 50% and HMS was 57%. In math the District was 58.5%, the state was 50%, and HMS was 70%. There are a lot of pieces that go into getting positive results for your students. He shared a couple of the pieces of the puzzle which included implementing their own content recovery classes in math, science, language arts, business office specialist, and PE. These classes helped as an intervention during the quarter, content recovery after the quarter, and was their in-house online classes for those five subjects. He said they passed more students and issued more credits. It was a creative thing that made a difference in student learning. Vice Principal Jaron Tate shared the next piece of the puzzle. One thing they strive to do at Hurricane Middle School is to make sure that all of their students go to Hurricane High School on track to graduate. When they saw a deficit in that and wanted to beef up the numbers they implemented a proficiency report. They started off trying to track down students that were not passing classes and provide them support to pass those classes. As they have moved to tying to focus on proficiency of the essential standards, they have changed it to really track the proficiency, not just the points students are earning in each grade. He shared a sample of the document used to track the proficiency of student which includes the student's name, a weekly update that is shared with the entire staff so they all can see what is working and what is not, the class they are in and the grade they are receiving, the percentage, absences, the three tiers of intervention being done, and teacher comments on what is working or not working with individual students so other teachers, administration, and counselors can collaborate and coordinate their efforts. There is also a place to track parent contact so they know how much and how often they are making contact home to address the needs of the student. It is a tool that has really helped them focus on their efforts and make sure they are on the same page. They don't want to overburden parents too much but want to make sure they have the whole picture. This allows them to ensure that if somebody is calling home and there are multiple classes that need to be addressed, they are making that effort. Another piece of that they are really focusing on is interventions. They started to track the interventions to do a better job of ensuring that student that need tier three interventions that are not receiving credit are receiving those. What they look at on a quarterly, but also weekly basis, are the interventions provided to those students that are not at the passing level. If the students are not passing then they are not proficient in the essential standards and they really want to provide that support for them. Principal Shaun Jaggi said the teachers do interventions on a weekly basis. This is just the way to track those and that is kind of their growth mindset. They do want to bring that information to the proficiency report to track intervention better. It is helping them keep track so the kids don't fall through the cracks. They have two intervention specialists who work with the tier three students or those below 39% and help make contact home more frequently and visit with the kids on a daily basis so there is constant contact with those kids that are falling through the cracks. They feel that these two pieces are making a difference. The intervention, being crystal clear on what they are teaching, the PLC process and using the same assessments, and data tracking are all part of a team effort. He said they currently have about 800 students at Hurricane Middle School.

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

No public comments were given on Board Action Items.

## **BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

### **Approval of Proposed Boundary Change Between Desert Canyons Elementary, Bloomington Elementary, Little Valley Elementary, and South Mesa Elementary – Nate Esplin**

Nate Esplin said that Desert Canyons Elementary has experienced a lot of growth and now has about 750 students. A boundary change is needed in order to help with future growth. Some of the other schools nearby have decreased enrollment. The proposal is to move the Desert Color area, about 50 students, to Bloomington Elementary and the Southern View and South Desert neighborhood, about 25 students, to Little Valley Elementary. There are no students living in the undeveloped other area.

**Board Member Wade presented a motion to approve the Boundary Change between Desert Canyons Elementary, Bloomington Elementary, Little Valley Elementary, and South Mesa Elementary. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Insurance Renewal Timeline – Tammara Robinson**

Tammara Robinson said the insurance renewal timelines are scheduled to get our renewal rates on the benefits at the end of January. She will then need to bring that to the board at the end of January or 1st part of February to get the approvals, pending anything that we get from budget changes with the legislative session. The last date to approve everything would be at the board meeting on March 2nd so we can have our Open Enrollment in April and get that process started with employees before they leave this summer. LaRene Cox noted how hard the Insurance Committee works to do all this research for the Board.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Insurance Renewal Timeline. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Policy 9100 Adult Education and High School Completion – Cheri Stevenson and Jan Goodwin**

Rusty Taylor said Policy 9100 is a new policy being proposed that references the Focused Graduation Program which the state law allows us to do as dual enrollment so students at high school can also do their GED with Southwest Adult High School. If they are able to pass those tests, they can get graduation credit so they can earn their diploma at their school. There are a lot of stipulations around it. Students have to be severely credit deficient or really behind, but it is a good way for them to catch up while still demonstrating their learning. This policy was presented 30 days ago and we have not received any comments on the proposed policy.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve Policy 9100 Adult Education and High School Completion. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Policy 1200 Pay and Compensation – Darin Thomas and Wade Jensen**

Wade Jensen said this policy was outlined 30 days ago and changes the compensated extra days for our media coordinators so that our high school media coordinators will have an additional nine days and our middle and intermediate will have an additional five days in the summer outside of their contract time.

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to approve Policy 1200 Pay and Compensation. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Policy 0005 Board of Education – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills said Utah code 53G-4-304 allows the board to appoint other necessary officers and we've never had the other necessary officers before in our District. Now the board has appointed legal counsel and so we have a hole in Policy 0005. Under 2.1.7 it states the URS eligibility for the board and the two other appointed officers, Superintendent and the Business Administrator. We've created an additional line in there that says as an appointed officer the District Counsel is exempt from coverage and thereby not enrolled in URS so we have it located in policy what the URS standing is for that individual. All the others are covered in one place or another in policy and we just need to have this in there as well.

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve Policy 0005 Board of Education. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **2026-2027 Calendar Change – Rusty Taylor**

Rusty Taylor said they noticed as we looked at the calendar for next year, we have October 8<sup>th</sup> and October 9<sup>th</sup> as Fall Break which is actually a week earlier than what we have done in the past. He suggested an adjustment to the Fall Break moving it to October 15<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup> and also to move the Teacher Prep Day from October 12<sup>th</sup> to October 19<sup>th</sup>. That will then add those days back into the first quarter bringing it to 42 days and will shorten second quarter back down to 44 days.

**Board Member Hammer presented a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Fall Break Calendar Change. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

There were no discussion items.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

There were no information items.

## **REPORTS**

### **Superintendent**

Superintendent Richard Holmes shared congratulations and kudos to every one of our teachers, preschool through high school, as our graduation rates came in at 93.2%. Last year it was 91.7%. That shows a district wide effort. Preschool also has a lot to do with that as they educate and prepare and build the foundation for those students. He thanked the teachers and administrators for all that they do.

Superintendent Richard Holmes also recognized Andy Griffin. Andy recently retired from the media. He spent 31 years reporting on local sporting events for our county and the last seven years he did The Daily Show. Superintendent Holmes appreciated that regardless of where he stood on a topic, you would never know, and he always welcomed us. He would always make sure that we got to tell our story and that was so meaningful to us. Steven Dunham said it was such a pleasure to meet with Andy once a month for the last several years. He never shied away from asking tough questions and there were often hard discussions, but he was always fair to us and you can't always expect that from the news media. He really respected that is grateful Andy gave him a chance to tell our story. He is grateful for the relationship of trust that built. Superintendent Richard Holmes presented him with a "Top Hat" Award. Andy Griffin mentioned that he is a product of the public education system in the State of Utah. His father was a high school teacher at Alta High School. His children all went through the Pine View cone site. He said he believes in public education and is really appreciative for everything being done in public education.

### **Board**

There were no reports from the Board.

### **Association**

Annette Merchant, WCEA, said they are looking forward the going up to the Educator Day on the Hill in January. They have already started planning and contacting legislators. She said in talking with members and teachers around the District, they would love to have the board members come into and visit in the classrooms and schools.

Jake Shewmake, WCEA, presented their Public Service Hero Award to Shaylin Lee from Hurricane Middle School and April Munt from Diamond Valley Elementary.

He shared that Shaylin's favorite part of teaching is the connection she builds with her students and how it keeps her on her toes and always makes life interesting. She loves watching them grow and feels that nothing beats seeing their progress. Some of the things Shaylin's peers, students, and parents shared were that her students love her and are always actively engaged in their learning. She is a fantastic teacher and colleague and is a true asset to Hurricane Middle School and the community. She is constantly changing her curriculum to meet the needs of the kids every year. She reaches out to the at-risk kids who miss school, meets them at the door, and has plans for them the minute they walk in to get them caught up on the standards missing. She doesn't just teach, she uplifts, motivates and inspires. She shows up every day with patience, kindness, and a real love for her students.

Jake Shewmake shared that April's favorite part of teaching is watching all the hard work pay off as the students grow their skills. She enjoys watching their faces as they realize that they have just

accomplished something difficult. Some of the things April's peers, students, and parents shared were that she exemplifies what it means to be a dedicated educator. She gives her time, energy, and heart to her students. She often gives up her own lunch to help with other needs around the school. She is quick to volunteer for programs and activities. She consistently puts students first. Diamond Valley Elementary is stronger because of her tireless dedication and unwavering professionalism. She is the epitome of what a top-notch educator looks like. She is fiercely loyal to her students, her colleagues, her school, and the school community. She is 100% committed to ensure that her students achieve at high levels of success.

### **PTA/PTO/Community Council**

Emily Pereira, Desert Hills Council PTA, shared some of the things the PTA is doing in their schools. The collaborations are being really strong. She is hearing that Desert Hills Middle School is getting some new corn hole games for the students to play during lunch that they're very excited about. Desert Canyons Elementary has received over \$8000 in teacher grants to help with learning in the classrooms from their PTA. The local PTAs are helping support teachers in other ways too. She pointed out the artwork in the hallway from one of their BTS art educators, Alicia Burton. She invited some parents to come and help her prepare for her art night. She does one in the fall and one in the spring and was helped very well by her PTA. Those are just some of the ways that the PTA is helping. They are also wrapping up the Reflections contest. This year's theme was, "I belong." She said it was very evident that Washington County School District is very good at making sure that their students feel like they belong. There was one student who wrote an entire song about how her teacher made her feel so happy when she was in her class. It was very lovely. She also expressed appreciate to the District for inviting the PTA into the Principal Pool interviews. It really helps solidify our collaboration they appreciate being considered.

### **PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 minutes each**

**Nataly Ramirez** addressed the Board on the ALP Program. She has a child going to the intermediate school next year. She would like a program at the intermediate letter where her child can connect with friends. She asked the Board to reconsider the honors and GT class at the intermediate school.

**Katelin Buchanan** addressed the Board on the GT program at intermediate schools. She is concerned about the absence of the GT program and classes at the intermediate school level for her children. She still wants the social life for her child but also doesn't want her child to have an experience of just receiving busy work when assignments are done. She has learned that for 6<sup>th</sup> grade who won't have a choice for gifted and talented courses in school. She said she is not pushing her child to exceed, but her child wants to be challenged and wants to do projects at deeper levels. Her child wants to be around other kids who are as mature. Her child has expressed homeschooling if programs are not offered.

**Joann Brinton**, State School Board Member, introduced herself and thanked the Board for their service. She is grateful to represent the District at the state level. She said she wants to do a good job but has a lot to learn. She loves education and probably thinks about it way too much. She feels from the Board and those who serve in the District a desire to do things better, to put the students first, and to have a quality education. It is hard when we have big class sizes, large families, and limited budgets and tax dollars in Utah. There are so many thing to balance in this area but she is grateful that her kids are going to school in Washington County. So many issues she hears about in the state she can kind of discount and say that doesn't happen in our county. She is appreciative of our Superintendent, Board, and our teachers. She would like to get out and visit the schools more and would love to tag along on school visits.

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:36 p.m. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**