

A

Board of Education Meeting - Jan 20 2026 Minutes

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Tooele County School District 92 Lodestone Way Tooele, Utah 84074

Page

1. Executive Session, 5:15 pm (Closed to Public)

Board members present: Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, Elizabeth Smith, Scott Bryan, Emily Syphus, ValaRee Shields, Todd Thompson (arrived 5:26 pm)

Administration present: Dr. Mark Ernst, Superintendent, Lark Reynolds, Business Administrator, Dr. Jeff Hamm, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent, Jackie Gallegos, Board Clerk

At 5:16 pm a motion was made by Board Member Smith and seconded by Board Member Shields to enter in executive session.

- 1.1 Pending or Reasonably Imminent Litigation
- 1.2 Purchase, Exchange, or Release of Real Property
- 1.3 Collective Bargaining
- 1.4 Character, Professional Competence, or Physical or Mental health of an Individual

2. Business Meeting 6:00 pm (Start of Public Meeting)

Board members present: Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, Elizabeth Smith, Scott Bryan, Todd Thompson, Emily Syphus, ValaRee Shields

Administration Present: Dr. Mark Ernst, Lark Reynolds, Dr. Jeff Hamm, Dr. Cody Reutzel, Dr. Sarah Jarnagin, Brad Hranicky, Angie Gillette, Marissa Lowry, Heather Castagno, Charles Hansen, Chantel Cowan,

2.1 Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

3. **Public Comment (Limited to three minutes per individual and a total of 30 minutes for all comments. To speak, sign up at the clerk's desk prior to the start of the open forum.)**

3.1 Patron Comments

Members of the public may address the Board.

- Lisa Johnson, TEA Member
- Tina Grossman, Former Teacher

4. **Information**

4.1 Fiscal Year 25 Audit Report

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Point of Contact: Lark Reynolds, Business Administrator

Senior Manager Thomas Hezseltine, from Squire and Company presented the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. He reported that the auditors examined the basic financial statements, federal programs, and the state compliance requirements. All three areas received an **unmodified opinion**, the highest level of assurance an auditor can provide. This outcome indicates that the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, and comply with applicable accounting standards, with no significant errors or misstatements identified. .

[Tooele County School District 2025 Audit.pdf](#) 

[Tooele County School District 2025 compliance reports.pdf](#) 

5. **Academics**

5.1 Curriculum Adoptions and Purpose and Features of Adopted Instructional Materials

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Point of Contact: Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Cody Reutzel presented an overview of the district's curriculum adoptions. His report explained the intent and purpose of the formal adoption process, including the

district's evaluation and selection procedures and the key features of the instructional materials that were adopted. He also outlined the planned implementation timelines and training supports designed to ensure fidelity of use and alignment with the Utah Core Standards.

[Curriculum Adoptions Jan 2026.pdf](#) 

6. Consent Items

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|-----|--|-------|
| 6.1 | <p>Minutes</p> <p>Point of Contact: Jackie Gallegos, Board Clerk</p> <p>Board of Education Meeting - Dec 09 2025 - Minutes - Html </p> | # - # |
| 6.2 | <p>Expenditure Report</p> <p>Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director</p> <p>December Board Expenditure Report.pdf </p> | # - # |
| 6.3 | <p>Revenue Report</p> <p>Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director</p> <p>December Board Revenue Report.pdf </p> | # - # |
| 6.4 | <p>Disbursement Report</p> <p>Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director</p> <p>12.25 Disbursement Detail Listing.pdf </p> | # - # |
| 6.5 | <p>Financial Reports</p> <p>Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director</p> <p>November Combined Financial Statements.pdf </p> | # - # |
| 6.6 | <p>Personnel Decisions</p> <p>Point of Contact: Charles Hansen, Director of Human Resources</p> <p>December Personnel Decisions 2025.pdf </p> | # - # |

6.7 Policy
Point of Contact: Chantel Cowan, Director of Policy and Math Curriculum

The following policies have non-substantive revisions:

- Policy 11004, Library Media Selection and Sensitive Materials Reviews

[11004-Library Media Selection and Sensitive Materials Reviews-Non-Substantive.pdf](#) 

6.8 Amended Trustland Plans # - #

Point of Contact: Area Directors

[CNJJHS Amendment 25-26.pdf](#) 

6.9 State Auditor-Fraud Risk Assessment # - #

Point of Contact: Lark Reynolds, Business Administrator

[Fraud-Risk-Assessment-TCSF FY26.pdf](#) 

Pull item 6.10 RFP from the consent items and approve as presented. # - #

Moved by: Scott Bryan

Seconded by: ValaRee Shields

Yea Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Todd Thompson, and Scott Bryan

Motion Carries 7-0

6.10 Request for Proposal # - #

Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for **Tooele County School District Onsite School Psychologist Services** was issued through Utah Purchasing via the Bonfire portal. The proposal submission deadline was **January 2, 2026**. Two proposals were received.

Following the initial review, both offerors met the minimum qualifications outlined in the RFP and advanced to evaluation of the technical proposals. Each offeror met the required technical threshold to proceed to consideration of the cost proposals.

A committee of five district employees met to review and score the proposals. Scoring results were documented on the evaluation sheets and were based on the technical and cost criteria specified in the RFP.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the committee recommended awarding contracts to **both Mindset and Bayly Psychology**, consistent with the RFP's designation as a multi-award solicitation.

During Board discussion, Member Bryan requested that the item be removed from the consent agenda for further consideration. He expressed concern that Bayly Psychology's proposal cost was nearly \$200,000 higher than the proposal submitted by Mindset.

Marissa Lowry, Special Education Director, stated that the district had been actively attempting to hire school psychologists for an extended period and had utilized recruiting services without success. For that reason, the district elected to issue the RFP for independent contractor services, and only Mindset and Bayly Psychology submitted proposals. She emphasized that the district had a need for both providers.

Member Bryan inquired whether the district could request a lower price from Bayly Psychology. Jill Whiting, Budget Director, clarified that the district could not renegotiate pricing; however, she noted that the RFP included provisions for an **annual review** of services and associated costs. Member Bryan felt it was best to discuss the two offerors separately and motioned to approve Mindset.

[RFP-School Psychologist.pdf](#) 

[Scoresheet School Psychologist - Public.pdf](#) 

Approve the RFP for Mindset

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Moved by: Scott Bryan

Seconded by: Robert Gowans

Yea Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields,
Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Todd
Thompson, and Scott Bryan

Motion Carries 7-0

Adopt a 1-year contract with Bayly, then put the RFP out again

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Moved by: Scott Bryan

Seconded by: Todd Thompson

Yea Robert Gowans, Todd Thompson, and Scott
Bryan

Nay Melissa Rich, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith,
and Emily Syphus

Motion Fails 3-4

DISCUSSION TO MOTION: Member Shields expressed concern that declining to approve Bayly Psychology's proposal could disadvantage the district in the future. She noted that if market rates increased, the district might later be forced to contract at an even higher cost.

Member Syphus also expressed concern that efforts to reduce expenditures could result in greater long-term costs. In addition, she emphasized that failure to approve the provider could limit the district's ability to meet student needs, as the availability of qualified school psychologists remained limited.

Approve Bayly RFP as proposed

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Moved by: Elizabeth Smith

Seconded by: ValaRee Shields

Yea Melissa Rich, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith,
and Emily Syphus

Nay

Robert Gowans, Todd Thompson, and Scott Bryan

Motion Carries 4-3

DISCUSSION TO THE MOTION: Member Smith expressed support for approving the RFP, noting confidence in the annual review provision that would allow the district to reassess the contract each year.

Member Syphus stated that she felt assured by the ability to review the contract annually and added that approving the proposal now would allow the district to secure a set price for services.

Member Bryan reiterated his concern regarding the proposal being approximately \$200,000 higher than the competing offer and emphasized the importance of careful financial stewardship and exploring opportunities to conserve district funds.

Member Thompson again inquired whether the district could return to Bayly Psychology to request a reduction in cost.

7. Action Items

7.1 2027-2028 School Year Calendar

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Point of Contact: Dr. Jeff Hamm, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Jeff Hamm, Assistant Superintendent, presented the proposed 2027–2028 School Year Calendar to the Board. He summarized the work of the 15-member Calendar Committee and reviewed key policy requirements considered in the development of the calendar. The proposed calendar included 173 student contact days and aligned with stakeholder feedback gathered through the district survey, which showed strong support for ending first semester before winter break and finishing the school year before Memorial Day.

[CalCommBoardPresentFINAL012026.pdf](#) 

[11021- Term of Instruction Length of School Day and Year.pdf](#)



[2728TCSDCalendarHighlights&Priorities.pdf](#) 

[2728CalendarStats\(Backside\).pdf](#) 

[202728CalendarProposal#1.pdf](#) 

Approve the proposed 2027-2028 School Year Calendar as presented.

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Moved by: Elizabeth Smith

Seconded by: ValaRee Shields

Yea Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Todd Thompson, and Scott Bryan

Motion Carries 7-0

7.2 Revised Policy 3035.2, Cash Receipts and Expenditures: Travel, 1st Read

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Point of Contact: Lark Reynolds, Business Administrator

Lark Reynolds, Business Administrator, presented revisions to Policy 3035.2, *Cash Receipts and Expenditures: Employee Travel*, for a first reading. She explained that during the review of Employee Travel Policy 1015, the policy committee determined that maintaining two separate employee travel policies was unnecessary. As a result, Policy 1015 had been consolidated into Policy 3035.2.

Ms. Reynolds noted that the updated policy provided clearer guidance on travel authorization and reimbursement procedures and established that per diem and mileage reimbursement rates would be reviewed annually and set as part of the district's budget development process.

[Revised Policy 3035.2 Cash Receipts and Expenditures Travel, 1st Read.pdf](#) 

[Policy 1015, Employee Travel Expense-Retire.pdf](#) 

[3035.2, Policy Review and Implementation Summary.pdf](#) 

Approve Revised Policy 3035.2, Cash Receipts and Expenditures: Employee Travel for implementation and Retire policy 1015, Employee Travel.

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Moved by: Todd Thompson

Seconded by: Robert Gowans

Yea Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Todd Thompson, and Scott Bryan

Motion Carries 7-0

7.3 Revised Policy 5014, Home Schools, 1st Read

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Point of Contact: Chantel Cowan, Director of Policy and Math Curriculum

Chantel Cowan, Director of Policy and Math Curriculum, presented the revised Policy 5014 for a first reading. She explained that the revisions aligned the policy with recent changes in House Bill 209, including replacing the annual homeschool affidavit with a one-time letter of intent and updating district responsibilities related to issuing attendance exemptions.

[Revised Policy 5014, Home Schools, 1st Read.pdf](#) 

[5014, Policy Review and Implementation Summary.pdf](#) 

Approve Revised Policy 5014, Home Schools for implementation.

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Moved by: ValaRee Shields

Seconded by: Emily Syphus

Yea Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Todd Thompson, and Scott Bryan

Motion Carries 7-0

7.4 Revised Policy 11009, Early Learning Plan, 1st Read

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Point of Contact: Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent, presented revisions to Policy 11009, *Early Learning Plan*, for a first reading. He explained that the proposed updates aligned the policy with current State Code and Board Rule requirements and incorporated new provisions related to early math plans and goals. Dr. Reutzel noted that these revisions reflected practices already in place within the district.

[Revised Policy 11009, Early Learning Plan, 1st Read.pdf](#) 

[11009 Review and Implementation Summary.pdf](#) 

Move Revised Policy 11009, Early Learning Plan forward for a 2nd Read.

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Moved by: Scott Bryan

Seconded by: Robert Gowans

Yea Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Todd Thompson, and Scott Bryan


Motion Carries 7-0


7.5 New Policy, Credit Evaluation Standards and Guidelines, 1st Read

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Point of Contact: Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent, presented a new policy titled *Credit Evaluation Standards and Guidelines* for a first reading. He explained that, during the review of current Policy 11006, it had been determined that a complete rewrite was necessary to better align with district needs and best practices. The new policy established clear standards and guidelines for evaluating credit, ensuring consistency and transparency in the process

[New Policy, Credit Evaluation Standards and Guidelines, 1st Read.pdf](#) 

[New Policy, Credit Evaluation Standards and Guidelines Review and Implementation Summary.pdf](#) 

Move the new policy, Credit Evaluation Standards and Guidelines forward for a 2nd Read.

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Moved by: ValaRee Shields

Seconded by: Elizabeth Smith

Yea Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Todd Thompson, and Scott Bryan

Motion Carries 7-0

8. Information, Discussion, or Calendar Items

8.1 Superintendent's Report

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Point of Contact: Dr. Mark Ernst, Superintendent

Dr. Mark Ernst, Superintendent, provided an update on the district's progress toward the K–3 literacy proficiency goal. He reported preliminary data showing continued improvement toward the district's target of 75% proficiency. Dr. Ernst also reviewed progress on key initiatives identified in the OLAG audit and outlined ongoing work to strengthen early literacy outcomes across all schools.

Dr. Ernst highlighted the district's "Foundations of Mission Control" leadership framework, which emphasizes the traits essential for driving school improvement—discipline, competence, confidence, responsibility, toughness, teamwork, and vigilance. He explained that these attributes support strong instructional leadership and align with the district's long-term academic goals. The report emphasized the importance of preparedness, persistence, and collective effort in promoting student success and sustaining continuous improvement.

[Superintendent's Report January 2026.pdf](#) 

[Audit Responses Chart.pdf](#) 

8.2 2025 SHARP Survey Results

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Point of Contact: Julie Spindler, Prevention and YIC Supervisor

Julie Spindler, Prevention and YIC Supervisor, presented the 2025 SHARP Survey results. She reported that nearly 5,000 valid student surveys were collected, providing a comprehensive look at youth health and behavior. Ms. Spindler highlighted positive trends, including continued declines in alcohol, marijuana, and vaping use, as well as improvements in students reporting depressive symptoms and suicide-related concerns. She also noted areas requiring continued attention, such as school safety concerns, bullying, and increasing use of nicotine pouches. The data will support ongoing school and community prevention efforts.

[Board Presentation 2025.pdf](#) 

[Tooele School District \(Grades 6-12 combined\) Profile Report.pdf](#) 

8.3 Board of Education Committee Reports January Reports

- President Rich provided an overview of the recent USBA Conference, noting that the event included training sessions focused on effective board governance and classes addressing common challenges faced by school boards. She encouraged patrons to contact their legislative representatives regarding education-related issues and to express support for bills that positively impact public education.
- Member Smith shared that she attended a class that aligned closely with the district's current academic initiatives and expressed enthusiasm about the session's relevance.

- Member Syphusechoed prior comments from TEA President, Lisa Johnson, encouraging continued support for public education throughout the legislative session.
- Member Shields expressed appreciation to Bob and Emily for their service on the Joint Legislative Committees.
- Vice President Gowans shared information regarding upcoming events: the **Utah Celebration of Education**, scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the Capitol Rotunda, and **USBA Day on the Hill**, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

9. Adjourn (10:00 pm Curfew)

9.1 Adjourn

At 8:55 pm, a motion was made to adjourn.

Adjourn

Moved by: Robert Gowans

Seconded by: ValaRee Shields

Carried