

January 2026 Board Meeting

Meeting Location: Whitehorse High School/Virtual

Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Members present

Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

Others present

Superintendent Christine Fitzgerald, Business Administrator Jacob Swanson, Assistant Superintendent Derek Begay, Human Resources Director Laura Palmer, Principal Kim Schaefer, LT Erickson, Jeff Winget, Jared Brown, Rob Henderson, Wendy Haws, Brenda Whitehorse, Eva Ewald, Jonathan English

Meeting called to order at 3:03 PM

A. Approval of Agenda

1. Approve Agenda - 3:00 pm

Motion to Approve the Agenda.

Motion by Lucille Cody, second by Don Mose III.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

B. SJ Quest Update

1. Spotlight Report- Navigate Prepared - Christy Fitzgerald- 3 min

Dr. Christine Fitzgerald shared aspects of the Navigate Prepared emergency app utilized by the school district.

C. Board Discussion Items *(Note, discussion items not discussed before 5PM break will be discussed later in the agenda at the board's discretion)*

1. Elementary School STEM Summer Camps USU - Dr. Lisa Boyce - 10 min.

Dr. Lisa Boyce shared goals, lessons plans, and comments from teachers and students regarding the upcoming STEM Summer Camps.

2. National Institutes of Health Research Proposal - Dr. Taylor Kelly - 10 min.

National Institute of Health Research Proposal requests a letter of support for their team from the Native Collective Research Effort to Enhance Wellness (N CREW). The team shared their project overview, and objective which outlined goals to develop community-led research programs for substance use and pain in the Utah Navajo Health System. N CREW requests a letter of support to conduct voluntary surveys for students aged 12-18. The survey would include questions regarding general community strengths and challenges, questions about root causes, and information about cultural practices and demographics. Surveys would be conducted in English and Navajo, would allow for anonymous response, and data would be collected in comfortable settings for families. Parental consent would be required for any underage participants. Participants can opt out at any time, group settings can be utilized for general questions, however, the team is prepared with mental health support for any further questions that may be more sensitive and need to be conducted in a private setting. Some potentially sensitive questions could include: demographics related to sex/gender, personal substance use history, peer substance use, and participant-initiated reportable information. Participants will be compensated \$100.00 for completed survey, data will be safeguarded and a report on results will be provided.

A draft of the requested letter of support is included in the Action Items later in this meeting.

3. SJSD Policy 5280 Instructional Programs: Home Instructional Programs - Laura Palmer - 5 min.

Human Resources Director Laura Palmer shared updates to Policy 5280 for a 1st reading. Updates include elimination information no longer mandated by the Utah School Board of Education and notice requirements from parents/guardians to the school district, and vice versa.

4. SJSD Policy 9510 School Safety: Safety Personnel - Laura Palmer - 5 min.

Laura Palmer shared updates to Policy 9510 for a 1st reading. The new policy outlines definitions and duties for school safety personnel and requirements for the Educator-Protector Program. The board may wish to convene in Closed Session for detailed discussion, if necessary.

5. SJSD Policy 5345 Instructional Resources: Artificial Intelligence - Laura Palmer & Jared Brown - 10 min.

Laura Palmer and Jared Brown shared Policy 5345 for a 1st reading. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the responsible, ethical, and secure use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. District students, patrons, and employees are responsible for knowing and adhering to this policy. It covers all AI tools used in instructions, assessment, communication, and operations. It applies to all district-owned or approved devices and platforms.

6. Proposed 2026-2027 Fee Schedule - 2nd viewing - Dr. Christy Fitzgerald - 5 min.

Superintendent Fitzgerald presented the proposed fee schedule for the 2026-2027 school year for the SJSD Board's consideration. State law requires two public opinion opportunities before approval. This is the second of two public opportunities to comment.

7. Audit Committee - RFP Process Review - Jacob Swanson - 5 min.

Business Administrator Jacob Swanson shared a review of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the district and Board Policy associated with the RFP Process. Vital to the process, and required by State law is an established Audit Committee which includes two board members. He outlined the responsibilities of the Audit Committee. Board Members Benally and Barton currently serve on the Audit Committee.

8. Blanding Elementary School Update - Jacob Swanson - 5 min.

Business Administrator, Jacob Swanson, provided a brief update on the progress of the Blanding Elementary School construction project.

9. Capital Follow-up - Jacob Swanson - 5 min.

The Business Administrator, Jacob Swanson, will update the Board on Capital Improvement Projects and the Entryway Projects.

10. USBA Annual Conference Share - President Nan Barton - 5 min

Board Members shared highlights from the USBA Annual Conference, attended in January 2026. It was noted that board member Ron Nielson was elected to represent 1A schools as a UHSAA board representative, along with two other SJSD principals.

11. Board Training & Development - President Nan Barton - 10 min.

Board President Barton and others commented regarding board training, community presence and recognition and accountability.

D. School/Director - Board Reflection Opportunity 4:00 p.m.

1. Report- Student Services - LT Erickson - 10 min

Student Services Director LT Erickson presented department information to the board on aspects of department finance, funding, federal programs, school based mental health goals, and school safety and security efforts. He highlighted departmental opportunities for growth, and noted department celebrations and progress.

2. Report- Bilingual Education - Brenda Whitehorse - 10 min

Heritage Language Director Brenda Whitehorse shared statistical information, department overview and mission, budget and financial information, needs assessment data, and aspects of the Title VI purpose and outline, Johnson O'Malley an Indian Education Committees. She noted department celebrations and challenges and encouraged the public and staff to submit comment to the department's specific online submission platform.

E. Break - @ 5:00 p.m.

F. Welcome and Recognition of Guests - 6:00 p.m.

G. SJ-2 Recognition Awards

1. San Juan Sweet Job Award: Frank Begay WHS

2. San Juan Sweet Job Award: Levonica Benally MCES

H. Citizen Comments

1. Citizens' Comments

No Citizens' Comments.

I. Closed Session *(At Board Discretion, Closed Session may be Moved)*

1. Purchase, exchange or lease of real property

2. Personnel

Motion to go into Closed Session to discuss Personnel. (7:48-7:59 pm)

Motion by Ron T Nielson, second by Colleen Benally.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

3. Litigation

4. Security

Motion to go into Closed Session to discuss Security. (8:00-8:22 pm)

Motion by Ron T Nielson, second by Colleen Benally.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

J. Consent Agenda

- 1. Minutes**
- 2. Revenue Reports**
- 3. Expenditure Reports**
- 4. School Expenditure Reports**
- 5. Personnel Report(s) and Information**
- 6. Monthly Checks**
- 7. Board Travel Reports**
- 8. Home School Requests**
- 9. Student Hearings**
- 10. SJSD Revised School Spend Plans**
- 12. Approval of all Consent Agenda Items**
- 13. School Land Trust Amendments**
- 14. Consent Agenda Approval**

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Motion by Ron T Nielson, second by Colleen Benally.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

K. Impact Aid - Native American Policy and Procedures - Public Hearing and Input - 6:15 p.m.

1. Impact Aid Overview and Application Review - Jacob Swanson/Christine Fitzgerald- 10 min

Business Administrator Swanson and Superintendent Fitzgerald shared the proposed Impact Aid Application. She noted the source check forms are the result of the work of many in the district to locate and document our students residing on tribal lands.

2. Native American Policy and Procedures Manual- Christine Fitzgerald- 5 min

Superintendent Fitzgerald shared the Native American Policy and Procedures Manual for the 2026-27 school year.

3. Public Comment focused on SJSJ Impact Aid Application/process

Public Comment regarding Native American Education was held.

Comment from Martin Yellowman regarding request to upgrade parking, new concession stand, more trees on school property, improved lighting and cameras on building.

Comment from Bill Todachinnie requested board presence at chapter meetings, amending wording in Native American Policy and Procedures to be more culturally sensitive.

Comment from Norman Lameman requested the RRLA internet connection program to continue.

Comment from Meredith Benally requests a separate middle school for Monument Valley and Montezuma Creek.

Comment from Mary Benally requests correction of traditional Navajo language curriculum and parent training for Native American curriculum.

Comment from Elsie Dee requested more accessible handicap parking, building and grounds upgrades, and concession upgrades.

Comment from Herman Farley requests more funds from Impact Aid be spent on tribal lands.

Comment from Tiffany Little requests increase in curriculum expectations, clarity on student eligibility and responsiveness from instructors.

Comment from Kailey Chee, WHS student, expressed concerns with school social and emotional climate, coaching concerns and requests more challenges from curriculum.

L. Possible Action Items

1. National Institutes of Health Research Proposal

Motion to approve the Letter of Support for the National Institutes of Health Research Proposal, with noted edits of the \$50 participant incentive rate raised to \$100.

Motion by Ron T Nielson, second by Don Mose III.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Don Mose III
Nay: Lucille Cody

2. SJSD Policy 5280 Instructional Programs: Home Instructional Programs

Motion to approve SJSD Policy 5280 Instructional Programs: Home Instructional Programs

Motion by Ron T Nielson, second by Lucille Cody.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

3. SJSD Policy 9510 School Safety: Safety Personnel

No Motion, requested 2nd reading.

4. SJSD Policy 5345 Instructional Resources: Artificial Intelligence

No Motion, requested 2nd reading.

5. 2026-2027 Fee Schedule

Motion to approve the 2026-2027 Fee Schedule.

Motion by Colleen Benally, second by Don Mose III.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

6. 2026-2027 SJSD Impact Aid Application

Motion to approve the 2026-2027 Impact Aid Application, and the allocation of 2026 Impact aid funds as follows:

*\$5,750,000 to the General Fund,
\$2,000,000 to the Capital Fund,
and any remaining balance to the Building Reserve Fund.*

Motion by Ron T Nielson, second by Colleen Benally.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

7. SJSD Indian Policy and Procedures 2026-2027

Motion to approve the Indian Policy and Procedures for 2026-2027.

Motion by Lucille Cody, second by Don Mose III.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

M. Information Items

- 1. Next Board Meeting February 10, 2026 @DO/Virtual**
- 2. CCR Day - February 4, 2026 - Early out for students**
- 3. SJSD District Spelling Bee - February 3, 2026**
- 4. USBA Day on the Hill - January 30, 2026 - Capitol Rotunda**
- 5. President's Day - No School - February 16, 2026**

N. Adjournment

1. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn.

Motion by Ron T Nielson, second by Colleen Benally.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Colleen Benally, Nan Barton, Ron T Nielson, Lucille Cody, Don Mose III

Board Officer

District Administrator