



**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Washington County School District**  
**121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah**  
**January 12, 2026**  
**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, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, 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, Learning Director Brian Stevenson, and Student Services Director Brad Christensen.*

*Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

Reverence by Executive Director Wade Jensen.

**WORK SESSION**

**Meeting with Municipality**

There was no city officials present.

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:41p.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, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, 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, Learning Director Brian Stevenson, and Student Services Director Brad Christensen, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Property and Personnel Items**

Property, Legal, Personnel, and School Safety Items were discussed.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 2:25 p.m. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING**

There were no discussions on items from the previous Board Meeting.

**WORK SESSION**

**Board PLC Training – Wade Jensen**

The Board PLC Training was postponed.

### **Sunrise Ridge Intermediate Name Change and Rebranding – Principal Mike Winslow**

Principal Mike Winslow and Assistant Principal Paula Haws shared their proposal and why they are recommending a name change and rebranding of Sunrise Ridge Intermediate. They are wanting to make connections between the intermediate school and the rest of the cone-site schools. They would like to change the name to Desert Hills Intermediate School. Intermediate schools are the first introduction for kids to the secondary school idea with different class periods. The rigor, class options, and grading are all new things that are introduced to kids at the intermediate school level and helps prepare them to be successful in middle school and high school. The idea of sharing a name and logo within the community connects the academic success and academic expectations for how they do things at Desert Hills. There are high expectations for academic at the high school and they want to maintain that. Paula Haws shared how she shared the connection and expectations of Desert Hills and being a part of the Thunder family as she did a mid-year orientation with students. As she watched the students processing the information it reinforced even more that they need to feel that kinship with the middle and high schools. Mike Winslow said the intermediate kids are only with them for two years and they don't have sports or other similar activities that might connect them to the school. Kids don't wear the Sunrise Ridge clothes once they leave Sunrise Ridge. He mentioned a question on the Sharp Survey about how often the student enjoyed being in school with results below 50%. Another question asked if there were lots of chances for students to get involved in sports and clubs. The results were also lower. It is hard for kids to feel that they belong to something when they don't have those types of things. Our community supports and knows the names of the high schools. Intermediate schools don't necessarily have that recognition. This change would help the students feel they are part of something bigger and give a sense of belonging to the Thunder family. Mike Winslow said they have community support and have discussed it with the Community Council, PTA, and school Vision Team. All of those groups are on board, supportive, and want to see it happen. He has also heard from parents who would love to have the school do this. He has not received any negative comments about changing the name. He has worked with the administrations at Desert Hills Middle School and Desert Hills High School who are supportive of the change as well. They have been preparing by getting grading practices more in line with the cone site and have done some vertical collaborations. He mentioned that with this, the Sunrise Ridge teachers can wear Desert Hills merch to help promote the next level even more. The school can have some aligned activities such as a school spirit week with Homecoming Week at the high school. They have already started doing some spirit assemblies to promote things like the fight song of the high school and other traditions. They have invited high school groups into the school for spirit assemblies. They have done leadership training where the high school athletes come doing training and talk with our kids about leadership and what it means to be an athlete. They can connect that even more when they say you are part of Desert Hills. The Thunder ware is a big thing. Things that they give kids and families can be worn for six years so they can feel like they are part of the big picture. It may also help some of the elementary teachers who come to the intermediate school to feel like they are part of the secondary program. They shared some proposed logos that include Desert Hills Intermediate, the thunderbolt, and hammer to connect with the middle and high school. They would replace the signage in the commons area and include some back lighting, they would keep the Thunder colors with the teacher signs, swap out the marquee, put the logo on the social media and email, and incorporate the Thunder hammer in the two stairwells. The PTA has committed to purchasing a shirt for every student when they transition. Any extra money they have through fundraisers will be put towards the cost. If approved, they would also do some solicitation to local businesses to help cover the costs. If approved in February he would start the bid process and the goal would be to have all the work done in the summer so they can open as Desert Hills Intermediate when coming back in August. David Stirland feels that the logo needs to differentiate better between the intermediate and the high school. Mike Winslow said within the building and on the marquee, they want Desert Hills Intermediate. The gear would look like the high school but not say the high school to just help that connection idea. Kids would be able to take the shirt or hat from the intermediate school and wear it the whole time as part of the Thunder family. With the stone in front of the building they would be able to get a steel placard that would go over the name there. He said that they have everything figured out financially. Brent Bills mentioned that one downside would be if down the road there were more high schools and middle schools than intermediate schools and the intermediate schools feed into multiple high schools.

Cheri Stevenson shared that the District is introducing honors courses in 6th and 7th grade English language arts and math to better serve advanced learners starting next school year. This move responds to parent concerns and teacher input for high-achieving students. Honors courses will allow self-selection without restrictive entry criteria such as grades or teacher recommendations, which aligns with secondary school practices. Implementation may vary by school depending on enrollment and scheduling capacity. Communication to parents will include invitations to register interest, helping counselors prepare schedules accordingly. The District is developing some guidance materials. This program replaces earlier honors offerings and represents a new approach to meeting student needs in intermediate grades.

### **Programs and CT High Updates – Cheri Stevenson**

Principal Chris Homer reported on what is happening at CT High School. They just wrapped up recruiting for next year. Career Tech High School received nearly 300 applications from eighth graders for next year, maintaining stable interest consistent with last year, and plans to accept just over 200 students. The school fills all eight programs, with a waiting list continuously managed for freshmen and sophomores throughout the year. The Health Sciences remains the most popular program, supported by two highly qualified instructors and unique state-level certifications. Engineering and construction rank second and third in popularity, while education is the least popular but shows increasing interest. Principal Homer emphasized that all programs are important career pathways, though some will evolve with AI integration, especially Computer Science.

A potential new initiative is the creation of a business and entrepreneurship center at Career Tech, possibly requiring a new building. This center would replace the current business pathway and partner with Dixie Tech for specialized programs like cosmetology. The goal is to equip students with business skills to support entrepreneurship alongside technical training. This idea responds to shifting program demands and aims to keep offerings relevant and expansive without overextending existing space.

Current healthcare students earn multiple certifications including CNA, medical assisting, phlebotomy, and EKG, positioning them for immediate workforce entry. These certifications are unique in the state, enabled by a \$200,000 grant received two years ago. Local healthcare employers actively recruit Career Tech students for internships and employment opportunities.

Tracking post-graduation outcomes remains difficult due to loss of contact, with students often opting out or entering the military, limiting long-term data collection.

Partnerships with Dixie Tech are strong but operational coordination remains a challenge due to infrequent meetings. Communication lines are open, with leadership including President Rushton readily available. Despite enthusiasm, the progress is slower than desired because meetings only occur every couple of months. The approach supports seniors attending Dixie Tech for advanced pathways, with Career Tech focusing on preparatory and foundational training.

Cheri Stevenson shared an update on honors courses and classes at intermediate schools. They have been able to meet with intermediate teachers and principals. The plan is to have honors courses for English Language Arts and Math in grades 6 and 7 starting next school year. Implementation will vary by school depending on enrollment and scheduling flexibility, allowing localized adaptation. Registration communications will encourage parent and student self-selection, adhering to the May 2022 state rule banning selection criteria like grades or test scores. The self-selection policy aligns with secondary education practices and supports open access to honors education. The District will provide guidance to parents on factors that may indicate student readiness for honors courses without imposing restrictions. There challenges in scheduling and differentiation have been acknowledged but principals have committed to moving forward with the honors offerings.

### **Building Update – Bryan Dyer**

Bryan Dyer shared an update on construction and renovation projects. Dixie High School building is on track for fall 2027 occupancy, with optimistic expectations for partial move-in by Christmas 2026. This project is running smoothly without major issues. The Pineview High School auditorium stairs are in. They have put up scaffolding and the project is going well. The seating is scheduled for delivery by June. It should be ready by the start of next school year. The Weight room and stadium stair renovation had

some water issues but it looks like minimal repair work is needed. The demolition work is nearly complete in the athletic locker rooms. The structural engineer is evaluating the stadium storage building. He reported on the Pine View Middle School renovations, including the commons ceiling repainting and courtyard improvements. The gym repainting is planned for summer. The lockers in the 200 hallway have also been painted. Work has started on the demolition of the media center and conference room. They are in coordination to minimize the disruption for the school. Things are going really well at Snow Canyon Middle School. The roofing installation is in progress above the weight room and kitchen. They are putting roof joists and skylights in the commons and are working on interior framing. Bryan Dyer said they are also closing out some of the priority projects. Design is underway for Pineview Performing Arts and Water Canyon Commons projects. The Enterprise High School auditorium GMP presentation is scheduled for January 26, with strong contractor participation and competitive bids expected. Plans for older elementary school renovations are being scoped with phased. Parking lot construction at recently acquired property near LaVerkin Elementary will proceed this summer with city permits in process. It was also mentioned that there is work being done at Desert Hills High School upper practice field to fix some issues.

### **USBA Update – Superintendent Richard Holmes**

Superintendent Richard Holmes felt the USBA Conference was great and recognized Heidi Gunn who was part of the planning. The Board Members shared some of their takeaways from the conference. Craig Seegmiller said he attended a couple of technology classes. The first one was an AI class, but it was mostly things we have already done. The second class was more interesting and shared ideas of how technology and particularly AI could be used. AI is here and is going to be used so we need to know how.

LaRene Cox also attended the AI training. She also attended a legislation class and an attendance class. The attendance class talked about building an attendance policy which we have. They did share some fun ideas about attendance and encouragement. She shared an idea she had talked with Heidi about of having cone sites complete with one another somehow to encourage kids to come to class.

Burke Staheli attended a session about demoralization and how to re-moralize our teachers that are feeling demoralized or feeling burnout. They shared how the Board or the leadership need to do things to keep the morale or heart in what we do. They shared that teachers are not getting burned out as much as they're getting demoralized because we're taking the heart out of education. David Stirland said they shared four strategies to re-moralize teachers including establishing core values and adhere to them, clarify purpose to make sure teachers understand their purpose, provide clear and concise direction, and have a culture of engagement between teachers and policymakers. Burke Staheli feels our District does a pretty good job with those things. David Stirland suggested communicating with the principals to make sure our educators are not demoralized.

Brent Bills said he attended a presentation on working with boards on handling board meeting and being respectful in board meeting between board members and also dealing with the public. He attended another presentation where the attorney said you can't do any of those things. He shared that he really enjoyed the presentation Thursday night with the commercial of growing up. Those in different generations internalized it differently. He shared that the presentation helped him realize that if other people are literally coming from a different basis, maybe it changes how you perceive them. Craig Hammer said understanding the generations helps you understand better who we are dealing. Brent Bills said we need to rethink some of ways you see things as other generations are not thinking the same way you are.

Ron Wade said that he attended a finance class. He pointed out that the accounting financial management of the education world is very different from the business world and it takes time to understand it. There is a dependency upon the business managers for information. He said it is time well spent to wrestle through the nuances of the budgets and finances so the Board can accurately participate in the very important process of deploying resources appropriately. He also attended all of the AI classes and said we are already ahead of most and up to speed. There was one idea that is already being worked on by Jeremy with how AI can immediately make things easier for constituents and employees logging into information on our website. That assistance could take a huge load from staff and would be good to implement. Craig Seegmiller also pointed out the benefit of being able to search policy quickly. Heidi

Gunn shared that the presenter also shared how you can take the legislative bills and pop them into AI to have the bill summarized. David Stirland said it was also mentioned that AI isn't always accurate. It will come up with what it knows. It is a tool but it doesn't think. LaRene Cox said the presenter commented that AI is only as good as the information input. It takes somebody to input the information and then you are limited to the truth as to what that person put in.

Craig Hammer attended a class on legal issues with presenter Daniel Harper. One thing he talked about was public comment at board meetings. Although the board may have to put up with negative comments about them, the staff should not be spoken about negatively. He also attended a speed networking class with only about six in attendance. A discussion came up about attendance/scheduling. It was mentioned a high school doing an eight-period day. They got into a big discussion on the block schedule, prep periods, and increased graduation requirements. It was a great discussion and they tackled some difficult subjects. He also mentioned the presentation on generations and the premise of thinking like those in that generation.

Heidi Gunn shared about the attendance class. She would love to talk and explore more in depth some of the things they mentioned that could spark some interest in elementary attendance. Some of the things they shared were kids wearing school shirts, kids getting to submit a vote, and awards really helped to boost attendance at their school. She shared that they had high school athletes do a short pep talk video telling the younger kids why they need to go to school and to go to school if they want to be a winner. They shared the video at all of their schools to emphasize the importance of attending school. She also attended a collaboration class on how to be a better board member. There were some great conversations with other school districts and it was great to hear about other boards.

Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned that he gets numerous complementary comments about our Board. Other districts feel our Board is amazing and mentions how our Board interacts, gets along, and is unified. He mentioned there were numerous comments on the board shirts making our Board look so sharp. Our Board really does set a great example for the other boards throughout the state.

David Stirland said he has thought a lot about the public meeting and really has not felt any compelling need to change anything. He appreciates that we don't allow personal attacks on individuals by name. He said we will continue with what we do and reiterated the practice of not having the public opportunity to address the board a discussion time. He thanked the Board for attending and sharing ideas.

### **Legislative Update – Superintendent Richard Holmes**

Board President David Stirland reviewed the calendar dates for the legislative sessions and who is scheduled to attend. Brent Bills mentioned that the flights and hotel rooms are already booked. Superintendent Richard Holmes said it is still kind of early to tell what is going to happen legislatively. He said there is going to be a push for K-3 literacy that will include retention. There will be a lot of steps prior to retention. He feels the steps may also include interventions and other things like that but also feels that there will still be parent choice with that. He feels that there will be a support piece to get aides in the lower grades to help with additional support. They are flat in terms of the budget. They explained that it is a normal year and that we just don't have new money. The worry is that they will pull money from somewhere and we just don't know what that will look like yet. There also seems to be a strong push to eliminate screen time and one-to-one devices in the lower grades in elementaries. He reported that the District is having to give back \$1.1 million to fund the catalyst centers. The funding that was given to help with the new fees bill that passed a year ago and we are now having to give it back to the state. He said that Brent Bills has put the District in a really good spot financially, but it still is a lot of money to give to us and then ask for it back. The group discussed hearing about a 5% cut that the State Office is being asked to do. Brent Bills said the executive appropriations got together and as part of the discussions for their base funding bill wanted everybody to come up with a 5% cut to their budget across the board. That information has not been communicated to the body as a whole so they may not get the votes needed. According to the legislative fiscal analyst, they are not supposed to go after the flexible allocation used for staff costs but are supposed to go through and look at different areas where they can cut costs. It is an exercise they are being asked to do whether they cut costs or not. He said there seems to be a misunderstanding on the hill about where money is in public education, which is mostly in salaries and benefits. David Stirland mentioned that Terry Hutchinson has been asked to keep the Board in the

loop with information so he anticipates that the board members will be receiving information. He said if there are issues that need to be talked about with legislators they need to know soon.

David Stirland asked the Board to sign up for the Sterling Scholar award presentations on March 2, 2026.

### **COSSBA/NSBA**

David Stirland said he would like to send two member to COSSBA on March 13-15, 2026. All of the board members will be attending NSBA in April. Craig Seegmiller said he would like to see what they have to offer. It was determined that Craig Seegmiller, Ron Wade, and Heidi Gunn would attend.

### **Literacy Update – Kathy Hall**

The Literacy Update presentation was postponed.

**Board Member Wade presented a motion to go into a closed session at 4:15 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, and Superintendent Richard Holmes.*

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Personnel Items

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 4:31 p.m. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD**

#### **Board Committee Discussions**

There were no Board Committee reports given.

### **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, Craig Hammer, and Heidi Gunn. Staff members present were Superintendent Richard Holmes and Business Administrator Brent Bills.*

### **OPEN MEETING – 4:30 p.m.**

1. Reverence by Member Staheli
2. Welcome – Board President Stirland
3. Pledge of Allegiance by Member Cox
4. Pine View Recognitions

Principal Brett Gifford recognized Coach Dave Holt who was selected as the 4A Distinguished Coach of the Year for Utah. Coach Holt has been a long-time successful teacher and is the Cross Country and Track Coach at Pine View High School. Principal Gifford highlighted Coach Holt's multiple state championships and his role in fostering student involvement outside of sports. He also mentioned that his wife Ally Holt, who is an amazing lady and supporter, was nominated as Mrs. PVHS.

Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned he is most impressed by the way Coach Holt treats and

takes care of the students on trips and in the classroom. Craig Hammer described the competitive nomination process and Coach Holt's top selection among the numerous candidates.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Minutes
  - a. December 8, 2025 Meeting of the Board of Education
2. Financial Report
3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items
4. Business Administrator Contract
5. Paradise Canyon Elementary TSSA Plan Change
6. Arrowhead Elementary TSSA Plan Change

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items numbered 1-6. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

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

### **Coral Canyon Elementary – Principal Julie Smith**

Principal Julie Smith shared what is right at Coral Canyon Elementary. Their theme this year is "It's our time to Shine." She shared some of the ways they are celebrating their amazing students. She shared the decision-making values that they use for all decisions at the school. In kindergarten they have the Letter Club, Number Club, and rainbow words that they are working on throughout the year with goals. It is a big deal for the kindergarteners to get into the club. When students get in the clubs and pass off their magic 13 words the teachers make a certificate and Principal Smith goes to the classroom to give them the certificate, cheer, and have a quick dance party to celebrate. She shared the data from the letter club. They are right with the District and work hard to make sure that is the focus for those kids. They do the same thing with high frequency words in first grade and second grade. The majority of text in those grade levels is made-up from those words and so they need to pass them. When students pass them off, she goes in to celebrate with them. It is a big deal to the students. She said in 1<sup>st</sup> grade at the beginning of the year 10% of the students knew their high frequency words and today they are up to 78%. It has made a huge difference and has impacted the 1<sup>st</sup> grade Acadience scores. For the middle of the year, they are the highest they have ever been. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade 86% of the students have passed on their high frequency words. They do PBIS as the school. Students receive Principal Pal cards if they are following the rules which they mail home to parents and have Principal Pal activities. The school does Math Masters in every grade level that they can earn. They also have monthly awards and recognition certificates for writing, super speller, and super citizen. They have a book vending machine which they have loved. They celebrate kids who are putting forth extra effort and doing what they need to do with the Heart of a Colt award. Teachers submit names of students for the award and each Monday she picks three names from those submitted to get a book and parents are called about the good things they are doing. The Courageous Colt award is something they can earn at the end of the year for passing off all of the essentials. Every student can earn the recognition and receives a medallion and certificate.

### **Desert Hills High School – Principal Justin Keate**

Principal Justin Keate and three students shared what is right at Desert Hills High School. His student council put together a video to highlight the strong thunder family culture and their commitment to student learning. A big focus this year has been helping every student at Desert Hills High School feel like they belong. In the video students shared that they like the family atmosphere at the school, everyone is friends with everyone, people are always there for you, the teachers have a willingness to help students learn, and the education at the school. They shared that the ACT composite score is 20.9, which is one of the highest scores in the District and in the state. They have many advanced high-level courses for student who want to be successful, fine arts programs, sports, & fun assemblies. In the video, Principal Keate shared that they have 1235 amazing students. Their commitment is to thunder family, students learning, and making sure that every student knows that they belong. The students present shared that their favorite thing about Desert Hills is that it is like family there and is a welcoming school, the school spirit with students so positive and fun, the support there, and the academic success.

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

There were no public comments on Board Action Items.

## **BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

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

Tammara Robinson shared that when full-time employees started paying insurance back in 2017, it did affect the amount that part-time employees who work 30 to 39.9 hours pay. Last year they saw a very significant increase when full-time employees started paying additional amounts on their premiums. The high-deductible health plan changed to 5% and the traditional plan to 15%. The Insurance Committee recommendation would be to change the amount the 30-to-39.9-hour employees are paying. For the traditional plan the 35-39.9-hour employees would pay 20% and if they are 30-34.9-hour employees, they would pay 25% of the premiums. For the high-deductible plan the 35-39.9-hour employees would pay 10% and the 30-34.9-hour employees would pay 15% of the premiums. It is a decrease in cost for all of the 30-39.9-hour employees. These are essential workers that are on the lower end of the pay scale and they were paying more for insurance so this is a way to help them out.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Insurance Premiums for part-time 30-to-39.9-hour employees as explained. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **Alternative Education Principal Selection – Superintendent Richard Holmes**

Superintendent Richard Holmes reported that there have been many interviews over the last week and a half. It was recommended to the Board that Troy Coil be selected as the new Alternative Education Principal. That position is currently the Millcreek High School principal. He also recommended that Bo Iversson be named as the Director of Southwest Adult Education.

**Board Member Hammer presented a motion to approve the selection of Troy Coil as the Alternative Education Principal. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve the selection of Bo Iverson as the Director of Southwest High School. 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 said there has been a lot of information in the news about the focus of our legislative body on literacy and there have been a lot of talk and reports comparing Utah to other states, specifically Mississippi. He commended Mississippi for their great work as demographically they have very high socioeconomic students with a lot of needs and so they've made great gains. He shared that in grade 4, we are #5 for math nationwide. That is really huge. What makes that more significant is that our per pupil spending is \$9900. The next lowest spending per pupil within that top 10 category is \$14,162. We are the very lowest per pupil spending in the top ten category. The highest is Massachusetts at \$24,000 per student. We are 5th in the nation. Mississippi has made great gains so that is what they are talking about. Superintendent Richard Holmes doesn't want those within our District and our parents to think we are doing poorly. We are doing outstanding. Our grade 4 literacy score is 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation and in grade 8 reading we are #8 in the nation. He commended our teachers for the great work they are doing and he gave a shout out to them and to our students for performing in such an amazing way.

### **Board**

No Board reports were given.

## **Association**

Annette Merchant, WCEA, said they are really excited for the opportunity to go up and talk to our legislators for Education Day on the Hill on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. There will be about six of their members going and look forward to getting to know our legislators.

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

Laurie Brown shared that Washington County School District has been a great school district to help my kids for the last 25 years. She serves as the Council PTA President for the Pine View cone site which has eight school PTA groups from Pine View High, Pine View Middle, Pine View Intermediate, Coral Canyon Elementary, Washington Elementary, Sandstone Elementary, Panorama Elementary, and Riverside Elementary. She was happy to report that in 2025 they got the PTA going again at Pine View High School. They have updated the bylaws and elected new officers. She appreciates the parents that supported that effort and said they have been trying new things to benefit the students at Pine View High. She said that the Coral Canyon Elementary PTA put on an Internet Safety Assembly and held a fall fundraiser they called Coco's Carnival. They were raising money for a Gaga Ball Pit for their playground which has now been installed. Sandstone Elementary recently held a Family Life Week with a list of suggested daily activities for families to do. They could fill out a slip reporting what they did and students could bring the slip back for daily prizes in each grade level. The other PTAs are also doing well and they're looking out for their students, families, and teachers at each of their schools. She said that the PTA is an advocacy organization and the Utah PTA has volunteers that are working with the legislators and are paying attention to every bill that affects children and families. Information is on their position is available on pta.org. The PTAs mission is to help make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. She expressed appreciation for the PTAs relationship with the School Board and District leaders and appreciate the opportunity every month to address the Board and meet regularly with the Superintendent. They also appreciate the principal's welcoming PTA into their schools and working with and supporting them and they hope in return that they are supporting and helping in our school communities.

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

**Bailey Willard**, CT High School, presented her concerns about substance use among peers. She said that 9 out of 10 students know someone who drinks alcohol, 7 out of 10 know someone who vapes, and 8 out of 10 know someone using drugs or pills. She said that substance use often stems from coping with anxiety, academic pressure, trauma, and loneliness, and not just peer pressure. Substance abuse directly affects attendance, behavior, and academics. She feels that current prevention methods focusing on saying "no" and warning students of the consequences are not addressing the root causes and mental health needs. She asked for education on mental health, easier access to counselors without stigma, and adults who ask "why" before punishing. She feels we need to address the reasons behind the behavior and not just the behavior itself.

**Board Member Hammer presented a motion to adjourn the open meeting at 5:18 p.m. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go into a closed session at 5:30 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, and Superintendent Richard Holmes.*

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Personnel Items

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 5:50 p.m. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT**