



AGENDA
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah
January 26, 2026
2:00 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 Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, Learning Director Brian Stevenson, Student Services Director Brad Christensen, and Bryan Dyer.

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence by Member Ron Wade

WORK SESSION

Personnel Updates – Superintendent Richard Holmes

Superintendent Richard Holmes reported on significant leadership changes are underway with multiple assistant principal and athletic director appointments made including Jandi Webb - assistant principal at Snow Canyon High School, Macee Black – assistant principal at Millcreek High, Darren Hadley – athletic director at Snow Canyon High, Jaron Tate – assistant principal at Utah Online, Alison Renstrom – assistant principal at Hurricane Middle School, Tracy Daniels – assistant principal at Hurricane Intermediate School, Ryan Eves – assistant principal at Pine View Middle School. Jandi Webb has started in her position. The others will start their new position on January 4 on July 1, 2026. Cheri Stevenson and Rusty Taylor mentioned that they do provide coaching and training for the new assistant principals. Darin Thomas reported that we currently have 27 certified and administrative retirements/resignations and 29 classified retiring or resigning. The ongoing bridge incentive program and sick day incentive for early retirements remains approved and active, with applications due by the end of January and board review and approval in February.

Legislative Update – Superintendent Richard Holmes

Superintendent Richard Holmes shared an update from the legislative session. He feels having board members attend the sessions as well has helped to build a relationship with our legislators. He said there are all kinds of proposals about budget cuts. LaRene Cox mentioned that in talking with Representative Colin Jack, every department has been asked to trim their budget by 5%. Brent Bills said the legislative uncertainty includes mixed messaging on budget cuts, proposed use of the rainy-day fund, and opposition within committees to certain funding shifts. The board supports engaging with Senator Lincoln Fillmore to negotiate modifications to SB 119 and SB 62, aiming to preserve flexible allocation funding earmarked for teacher salaries. The District faces the potential of losing \$8 million in state funding from the cuts proposed legislation affecting teacher pay and enrollment funding formulas. David Stirland feels the message this year should be to not approve any unfunded bills if they are decreasing the budget. Superintendent Richard Holmes said as we approach staffing, he has suggested holding until we get to the end of the legislative session. He said we may want to consider an early retirement incentive if it would help keep us from having a reduction in force. Brent Bills mentioned that one positive thing is that we have the fund balance and can hold off on some of the capital projects and move them back to the capital plan.

Some of the concern is also with enrollment numbers. He said our estimates are that we are going to be down about 610-615 students in our brick-and-mortar schools with the high school class graduating and a smaller number of kindergarten students coming in. The new growth is not making up that difference. Superintendent Richard Holmes expects that there will be some cuts come at the expense of adding more resources to K-3. David Stirland suggested that teachers need to realize that this could be a lean year. Brent Bills said we should easily be able to cover 40-50 teachers through attrition. The problem comes when it is a specific subject teacher that leaves. We may have to move teachers from one school to another or split teachers between schools. Superintendent Richard Holmes said there are still a lot of unknowns, but we are in a good place. We may need to tighten our belt and hold off on some of the construction projects. Burke Staheli updated on the UHSAA moratorium. There is a push to drop it from legislation and let the UHSAA handle it. They would look to do two full week moratoriums by sport. Brent Bills mentioned SB 164 which would require boards to get permission from DFCM before building a building. He mentioned SB 261 which deals with compensation for executive staff and another bill that raises and pay for superintendents. The group discussed other bills that could be of concern for school board authority.

Water Company Update – Board Member LaRene Cox

LaRene Cox and David Stirland shared an update on the Water Company. The district plans to meter water usage for connected properties, charging for excess water sales while prioritizing school irrigation. Terry Hutchinson is working on a letter to go out. The existing pipeline infrastructure will be utilized extensively, reducing new construction needs. Legal agreements and notification letters are being prepared to inform water users of service changes and meter requirements. Coordination with state and local officials continues to finalize right-of-way and engineering details. The water collection pond is currently at near-full capacity, giving optimism for adequate supply despite lean water years.

America 250 Report – Cheri Stevenson and Nate Esplin

Nate Esplin and Cheri Stevenson shared that the district has implemented a broad America 250 celebration program across elementary and secondary schools, featuring assemblies, guest speakers, student art, and history fairs to enhance civic education. Activities included veterans' day ceremonies, wreath-laying, and flag displays involving multiple schools and community partnerships. Secondary schools engaged in competitions like a historical "Sweet 16" bracket and special edition spirit wear sales tied to patriotic themes. The district coordinated with local history committees to offer lectures and contests, with incentive programs to encourage student participation. ROTC units contributed significantly by organizing flag installations and ceremonial drills honoring veterans. The program fosters patriotic awareness and community engagement, supporting social studies curriculum goals.

Board Representative for Monthly Safety Meeting – Superintendent Richard Holmes

Superintendent Richard Holmes said we have had no board member attending the monthly Safety Meeting since Becky Dunn. Brad Christensen mentioned they are once monthly on the 1st Thursday. They look at school safety plans and route plans. Ron Wade will serve on the committee with Burke Staheli as an alternate if needed.

Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned the request from the PVHS JROTC to travel out-of-state to Hawaii. He reviewed some of their past trips. Craig Hammer feels their trips have been academic. There is a policy about only traveling to bordering states. We have allowed CTSO students to travel to national conferences. Discussions were had on the benefits of the JROTC program. Superintendent Richard Holmes said they would also like to bump up the fee for student travel from \$800 to \$1000. They do fundraise for most of the cost. The students do have to qualify to be eligible for the trip. Brent Bills mentioned a couple of concerns from their last trip with expenses. They need to come ahead to have a conversation prior to the trip on all of the details. The military has liability insurance that would cover the travel. Cheri Stevenson mentioned that we are one of the few JROTCs in the entire country that get to go on this trip. It is pretty prestigious and very few have that experience.

Superintendent Richard Holmes said that in the priorities the District is trying to narrow things down to essential things that we will cover and non-essential things that we will not cover. Rusty Taylor said one of the issues comes when one school gets something, the other schools want it too. It becomes a funding issue. Brent Bills said we are getting more and more requests. The administration is trying to come up with a list of things that we do, things that schools can fundraise for, and things that we are not going to allow because the costs on the other end to undo it are too expensive. Jeremy Cox said another aspect to consider is that every piece of equipment or item put in has a maintenance cost associated with it long term. Cheri Stevenson said that part of the discussion was also to make sure that when schools are wanting to do a non-essential project that it meets a certain standard. It would include some essential steps of preplanning so all involved are seeing it. If schools are wanting to upgrade, they can work directly with the department that oversees it to upgrade. If a wants to do something more and add something new, then it would be required to go to the building committee through form 1105. That way it can be determined whether it can be supported or not. However, the 1105 projects will not become the new standard. We want the schools to be able to fundraise but also do not want to create a lot of disparity between the schools.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

There were no public comments given on Board Action Items.

ACTION ITEMS

Bid for EHS Auditorium Project – Brent Bills

Bryan Dyer shared the site plan for the Enterprise High School Auditorium. The plan includes building a new auditorium, parking and a new shotput ring. Gene Madsen, Hughes General Contractors, and his company have been vetting the bids and talking with the subcontractors. Gene Madsen said the proposed contact for Enterprise High School auditorium includes the auditorium for \$11,481,311, scope allowances \$661,400, and the CM/GC contingency for \$550,000 for a total of \$12,692,711. Craig Seegmiller said he appreciates the CM/GC process. Gene Madsen explained to process in working with subcontractors. The building is 17,000 square feet. David Stirland said that this will be a two-year project. The plan is to start in March 2026 and complete in July 2028. The auditorium will have about 500 seats.

Board Member Gunn presented a motion to approve the Enterprise High Auditorium bid for \$12,692,711 . Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

CTE Property Purchase – Jon Butler

Brent Bills reported on the CTE property purchase. They would like to purchase three lots from Brent Burgess. He will donate a fourth lot to the CTE program. Three of the lots have appraised at \$175,000 and the fourth one at \$174,000. He requested approval to purchase the three lots at \$175,000. The lots are 10,323 Sq. ft.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve the purchase the three lots as explained.

Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

2027-2028 Calendar – Rusty Taylor

Rusty Taylor reviewed the 2026-2027 calendar and the proposed 2027-2028 calendar for approval. School will start on August 13, 2026 and teachers will come back on August 6, 2026. The calendar includes standard holidays, breaks, and a full two-week winter break. March is a little different because Easter is so early. He took the Teacher Prep Day after Spring Break and moved it the April as there was no break in April. For 2027-2028, teachers will go back on August 5, 2027 and school will start on August 12, 2027. The holidays and breaks are the same through December with two full weeks off for Christmas. In February 2028 a teacher prep day was added to the President's Day weekend giving a four-day break. The March teacher prep day was left on a Friday to not have all the days on Monday. Superintendent Richard Holmes suggested after this year we could change the Friday teacher prep day if negative feedback is given. Teachers do like having the prep day following the break. The board suggested moving the March 10, 2028 teacher prep day to March 20, 2028 following the break.

Board Member Hammer presented a motion to approve the 2027-2028 calendar moving the March Teacher Prep Day to March 20, 2028. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

UFA – Rusty Taylor

Rusty Taylor said we are currently only serving 16 UFA students. Brent Bills said there are only seven recorded on Odyssey. With all of the difficulty the District has had with the program the recommendation is that we no longer continue as a UFA provider. Elementary was cut off last year and we have cut off athletics. The students would be done at the end of the year. Those students who are part of the Utah Fits All students participating in the Utah Fits All Scholarship are actually opting out of any public education.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to no longer provide for the UFA Scholarship students. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Proposed Board Meeting Date Change for April

The Board discussed options for a date change for the April 2026 Board Meeting. It was decided to change the April 13, 2026 meeting to April 6, 2026.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Board Meeting date change from April 13, 2026 to April 6, 2026. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to go into a closed session at 4:31 p.m. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

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CLOSED SESSION

Property and Personnel Items

Personnel Items

Board Member Cox presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 5:03 p.m. Board Member seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to adjourn at 5:04 p.m. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT