

Granite School District
Board of Education Meeting
Tuesday, February 3, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Education of Granite School District convened in the Boardroom at the Granite Education Center, 2500 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah. President Nicole McDermott called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM, those in attendance:

Nicole McDermott	President
Kris Nguyen	Vice President
Connie Burgess	Board Member
Kim Chandler	Board Member
Julie Jackson	Board Member
Clarke Nelson	Board Member
Karyn Winder	Board Member

The following members of the administration were present:

Ben Horsley	Superintendent
Todd Hauber	Business Administrator
Dr. Mitch Nerdin	Chief of Staff
Leslie Bell	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Tyler Howe	Assistant Superintendent

Doug Larson, General Counsel, and Stacy Bushell, Executive Secretary, were in attendance.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Capital and Construction Update

Justin Naegle, Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Director, and Chris Kartchner, BDK, presented information about current construction and capital projects.

Elementary Science Curriculum Adoption

Christine Drummond, Associate Director, Elementary Core Learning, presented a committee recommendation for elementary science instructional materials. This information is presented to the board in compliance with Senate Bill 55, Utah Code, and Board policy. The recommended materials are Mystery Science, links for parents to review these materials will be available for the next 30 days on Granite's website and in person at the district office. Parents are invited to give feedback and ask questions during this time. A final recommendation for adoption will be made at the March Board meeting.

School LAND Trust Plans, Final Report

Dr. Joan Bramble, Organizational Effectiveness Director, shared the 2024-2025 School LAND Trust Plans final report. Final reports have been completed by each school and are currently being submitted to the state website, board members can login in to view each school's plan. An overview of common school goals and strategies was included in the presentation.

Schools will be developing plans for the 2026-2027 school year with approval through school community council motion by March 25th. Board members complete annual training and will review the 2026-2027 plans in May.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Negotiations

President McDermott said there is need for an executive session and called for a motion.

Motion: **I move we go to executive session for the purpose of negotiations.**

Made by: Kim Chandler

Seconded by: Julie Jackson

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed, Yea: 7, Nay: 0

Connie Burgess: Yea, Kim Chandler: Yea, Julie Jackson: Yea, Nicole

McDermott: Yea, Clarke Nelson: Yea, Kris Nguyen: Yea, Karyn Winder: Yea

The executive session convened in room B-216 at 6:15 p.m. Those in attendance were Connie Burgess, Kim Chandler, Julie Jackson, Nicole McDermott, Clarke Nelson, Kris Nguyen, Karyn Winder, Ben Horsley, Mitch Nerdin, Todd Hauber, Doug Larson, Leslie Bell, Tyler Howe, and Stacy Bushell.

Motion: **I move to adjourn executive session.**

Made by: Karyn Winder

Seconded by: Kris Nguyen

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

The executive session adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

GENERAL BOARD MEETING

The Granite School District Board of Education reconvened at 7:03 p.m. in the Boardroom. President Nicole McDermott welcomed all in attendance for this session and called for a roll call of board members; all board members were present. Superintendent Horsley was present. President McDermott invited those representing organizations to introduce themselves:

PTA Liz Shellum, Amy Warren, Haley Jones, and Michelle Steenblik

GEA Michele Jones, Caren Burns, and Shannon Garner

Pledge of Allegiance

Reverence - William Penn Elementary

GOOD NEWS MINUTE

Kim Chandler attended the USBA Conference, USBA Day on the Hill, and the Granite STEM Fair. At the fair she enjoyed a student's project to prove or disprove the 5 second rule when food is dropped on the ground. Results showed similar levels of bacteria, whether gummy bears were picked up immediately or left for 10 seconds.

Julie Jackson participated as a judge at the STEM Fair and learned that chocolate milk is the best remedy for food that is too spicy. She had opportunities to advocate for public education in Washington DC and at the state level. She has noticed the resilience teachers have in January; it is a hard time. "We see you and appreciate you."

Connie Burgess attended the CTE Open House event. It was wonderful to see students visiting displays on all 5 floors, the event was well attended. These classes can prepare them for real life and employment after high school.

Kris Nguyen attended Region 5 PTA Reflections awards night, there will be 86 winners representing Granite at the state level. The Excel bus tour was so much fun, they traveled to schools surprising teachers and administrators who were selected for this recognition. The auditorium at Cyprus High is complete and students were finally able to perform their fall musical, *Freaky Friday*. The sound system was great, you could hear everything!

Karyn Winder was excited that there were Excel Award winners at three schools in her area. The Jazz bear makes it fun and we appreciate that partnership. Principal Chofin was so surprised. She attended the USBA Conference. Swim season is ending she has enjoyed watching the meets. There are awesome questions from SCC parents, they want to help and make a difference.

Clarke Nelson reflected on schools as center pieces of our community. Last night the Cottonwood community came together to honor the life and contributions of Greg Southwick, recently retired Athletic Director who died unexpectedly in January.

Nicole McDermott visited with many legislators on Day on the Hill and appreciated the time they spent with our board members. The board conducts evaluations of the superintendent and business administrator. Board members recently completed a self-evaluation. We all go through that process and make goals to improve.

RECOGNITION

High Improved Proficiency

Dr. Joan Bramble introduced schools with the highest proficiency gained for 2024-2025.

Elementary: Truman 3.6%, Monroe 3.85%, Beehive 6.13%, Whittier 7.17%, and Academy Park 10.78%, Junior High: Hunter 2.39%, Granite Park 3.32%, High School: Olympus 10.53%

GRANITE ELECTED OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION- none

PATRON PARTICIPATION

Shannon Garner, teacher and parent, thanked the board for the ways they support students and their dedication. Her 5th grade student has shown so much growth, and the school is very inclusive. She complimented Dr Nerdin and Dr. Howe; she was impressed with their interactions at the DCC meeting. They listened, allowed input, and took notes of what parents had to say.

CONSENT ITEMS

Minutes, January 6 & 20, 2026

Purchases

Change Order

Personnel

Employee Hires and Separations

LEA Specific Licenses

Financial Reports

Purchase Order Summary

Change Order Summary

Accounts Payable Pay Vouchers

Principals Cash Report

Monthly Budget Report

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) Travel

Comprehensive Guidance Plan

LAND Trust Amendments

Motion: I move we accept the Consent Agenda.

Made by: Kris Nguyen

Seconded by: Karyn Winder

Kim Chadler said she plans to vote no because of her concerns about curriculum items.

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed Yea: 6, Nay: 1 (Kim Chandler)

ACTION ITEMS

Administrative Appointments and Transfers

Administrative appointments effective February 9, 2026.

Valerie Bergera	Associate Director	Student Assessment
Grace Morrell	Principal	Armstrong Elementary
Tarell Richards	Principal	Lake Ridge Elementary

Administrative appointments effective July 1, 2026.

Dr. Mandy Chapple	Director	Career and Technical Education
Emily Ripko	Director	Preschool Services

Administrative transfers effective February 9, 2026.

Eric Bailey	Assistant Principal	Cyprus High
Heather Bakrim-Miller	Principal	Oakridge Elementary
Andrea McMillan	Assistant Principal	Taylorville High
Josh Moore	Assistant Principal	Granger High
Ana Pendelton	Assistant Principal	Dos Mundos and Monroe Elems.
John Paul Sorensen	Assistant Principal	Taylorville High

Motion: I move that we approve the administrative appointments.

Made by: Karyn Winder
Seconded by: Connie Burgess

Called for vote: President McDermott
Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

2027-2028 Calendar Adoption

Luke Allen and Jen Bodell presented the Calendar Option survey results. Overall, the preferred option was Calendar B.

Motion: I move that we approve calendar B as a first reading.

Made by: Karyn Winder
Seconded by: Kim Chandler

Discussion: Julie Jackson acknowledged that the Olympus area preferred Option A and therefore she will vote against Option B to represent their voice. Kim Chandler felt neither calendar is ideal. Connie Burgess would prefer school to start on a Wednesday. Kris Nguyen also prefers for the first day of school to be on Wednesday, neither option had a Wednesday start. Karyn Winder said what everyone really wants is to start after Labor Day, a full fall break, three days for Thanksgiving, a two-week Christmas break, a week for Spring break and to end the school year before Memorial Day. That is not possible. She appreciated that the calendars were different. With the split response only 54% of respondents will be happy with the decision. Nicole McDermott would like questions on next year's survey to link elements of the calendar options.

Called for vote: President McDermott
Results: Motion Passed, Yea: 6, Nay: 1 (Julie Jackson)

INFORMATION ITEMS

Granite Education Foundation (GEF) Report

Jadee Talbot, GEF Director, reported last year was the top year for donations (\$3,419,713 YTD) and volunteer hours (9,830 hours) for the foundation. There are four pillars guiding the foundation: Access to Opportunity, Educator Support and Recognition, Food Assistance, and Student Aid. He shared details of many programs that are in place to accomplish the GEF mission. Many corporate and individual sponsors support GEF, allowing the work to move forward for the benefit of Granite students and teachers.

President McDermott thanked Mr. Talbot and his team for the extra hours they spend on service projects and other events; they go above and beyond with a vision of taking care of our kids.

FTE Allocation and Comparative Staffing Processes

Dr. Patrick Flanagan shared the processes that guide staffing and FTE allocation practices. Human Resources serves as the fiscal steward, to ensure that FTE is allocated based on projections and negotiated staffing ratios. A committee reviews unique school needs and makes necessary adjustments. Managing FTE accurately in the Spring and Fall is a vital component of fiscal responsibility. School districts along the Wasatch Front generously shared their staffing ratios and processes for comparison.

Board discussion and questions:

How long does it take the committee to decide on fall staffing appeals? The committee meets at least weekly, often more, and renders their decisions as quickly as possible.

There were several questions about enrollment projections. As enrollment declines it is increasingly difficult to accurately predict enrollment. We do not have data regarding incoming kindergarten students or students attending charter schools. There is not a system in place to obtain these counts. This year an event was held in January to encourage families to pre enroll kindergarten students for fall 2026. Although we track open enrollment applications in all grades, parents can apply to multiple schools, therefore, schools cannot rely on an application guaranteeing enrollment of the student.

Why are there more or less students in a class than the staffing ratio indicates? The ratio is based on averages and not a cap. Principals, with guidance from their director, decide on FTE allocations in their school. In our elementary schools, directors helped principals to adjust their staffing plans ensuring they worked to allocate FTE to K-2 classes as intended by the Board. In high schools, some class enrollments are higher, which allows more diverse class offerings, and teacher preparation time each day. Class enrollment is not capped because there is not enough funding, one additional student does not generate enough funds to add another teacher.

Student Assessment Update

Dr. Joan Bramble shared assessment results from State accountability indicators. Charts showed how points were distributed among these indicators. A link to individual school report cards was included in the presentation. There was a 1% increase in the overall graduation rate. The percentage of 11th graders in Granite scoring 18 or higher on the Spring ACT decreased over the past 3 years. Percentages of students in the 2024 graduating cohort who earned C or better in advanced courses was another measure. English learner progress was measured on the WIDA test. Students making adequate progress increased in high school while K-8 decreased. ELA, Math and Science scores based on RISE/Utah Aspire Plus for the past three years were shown on graphs. Growth measures evaluated individual students to compare their growth in 2024 and 2025. Early literacy measures are not part of school accountability but were included in the presentation. Resources for more information were linked at the end of the presentation.

Board comments:

Krin Nguyen thanked Dr. Bramble for the links to additional information. Karyn Winder said she hears good things about Dr. Bramble and thanked her for the work she does.

SECOND READINGS

Article VII.C.2. School Grounds Access and Safety

This is a consolidation of policies regarding grounds use. It balances new state school safety rules from HB 84 legislation against our obligation to use schools as civic centers for the community. This policy also clarifies which activities are prohibited on school grounds and under which circumstances animals may be on school property. Doug Larson reviewed the revisions made since the first reading.

Motion: I move we accept Article VII.C.2. School Grounds Access and Safety as a second and final reading.

Made by: Kris Nguyen

Seconded by: Julie Jackson

Kim Chandler asked for clarification for what is meant by other animals. Mr. Larson said the language is meant to include all mammals, reptiles, birds, etc.

Call to question: Clarke Nelson

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

Article X.A.4. Senior High School Graduation Standards and Requirements

These are updates to our existing policy that add guidelines for the Focused Graduation Pathway program as required by state law. The Focused Graduation Pathway program allows students at Granite Connection High School, who are behind on credits required for graduation, to obtain needed credits through General Educational Development (GED) exams. This program will not be used to facilitate early graduation. No changes were made from the first reading

Motion: I move that we accept Article X.A.4. Senior High School Graduation Standards and Requirements as a second and final reading.

Made by: Karyn Winder

Seconded by: Kris Nguyen

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

Fiscal Policy Manual – Section 7, Section 16

These sections of the Fiscal Policy Manual are being updated to increase the minimum threshold for certain purchase or contract requirements. Previously the minimum threshold before multiple bids were required to be obtained by principals before making purchases was \$499 and it is now \$999. This change puts us in line with other districts in the state. Recommendations were made by the Accounting and Purchasing departments since the first reading. Slight cleanup to Section 7 is recommended to remove any references to payments by school check. School checks are no longer used. In addition, the minimum threshold in Section 16 also needs to be updated to match the threshold in Section 7.

Motion: I move that we approve Fiscal Policy Manual - Sections 7 and 16 as second and final reading.

Made by: Karyn Winder

Seconded by: Julie Jackson

Called for vote: President McDermott

Results: Motion Passed Unanimously

SUPERINTENDENT and BOARD REPORTS

Superintendent Horsley explained why there was not a boundary study report tonight. There is pending legislation that could impact future decisions, we are gathering information based on past studies and are not anticipating a study this year. It has been busy with the Excel bus tour, starting the 2nd round of site visits, and the legislative session. Todd Hauber represents Granite during the session and our legislative intern; Mary Sheets updates the tracker. There are already 200 education related bills. We look forward to transitions with mid-year administrative appointments. There is potential to do this more in the future. Superintendent Horsley thanked Leslie Bell for her efforts with principal professional learning, and PLC to align support for schools. Principals respond, they appreciate and enjoy their cadres.

Julie Jackson said the District Community Council held a great meeting where parents gave feedback about Proficiency Based Learning.

Kim Chandler attended a Parks and Recreation meeting. It was administrative in nature and there is nothing specific to share.

Connie Burgess said the Joint Legislative Committee will be meeting on Fridays during the legislative session.

Clarke Nelson represented Granite on the taxing entity committee for Taylorsville City. He thanked Todd Hauber for his leadership which helped to facilitate a successful process and outcome.

Nicole McDermott said the 8-hour task force shared a report with board and the information they gathered will go forward to negotiations.

ADJOURN

President Nicole McDermott adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Note: A copy of related materials and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/> and <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Organization/2744>

APPROVED: March 3, 2026