

Wasatch County School District Board of Education Budget Work Session Minutes (DRAFT)

Date: February 27, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Location: Zermatt Resort

Attendees

Board of Education: Board President Kim Dickerson, Vice President Cory Holmes, Breanne Dedrickson, Brad Ehlert, Jake Collett

District Administration/Staff: Superintendent Garrick Peterson, Jason Watt, Eric Campbell, Stephanie Discher, Stacey Moore

Welcome and Purpose

Board leadership and district administration met for a budget work session focused on long-range capital planning, remaining needs associated with Deer Creek High School, facility priorities across the district, and Board philosophy regarding fund balance, and debt.

Capital Fund and Financial Outlook

The group reviewed the Capital Fund and discussed strategic options.

Options discussed included:

- Purchasing land or buildings with cash
- Reducing taxes for the community
- Paying off debt to reduce interest costs

Debt and refinancing were also discussed:

- The group noted that the school bonds will be callable in 2032 and could potentially be refinanced or sold for a better rate at that time.
- The group discussed the principle that a fiscally responsible approach is often to pay off debt and avoid interest when feasible.

Planning Needs and Space Considerations

The group discussed future facility needs and whether the district requires additional space for professional development or another building concept to support district operations.

Deer Creek High School Remaining Items

The group reviewed remaining items and costs related to Deer Creek High School.

Discussion and the importance of prioritizing safety needs and improvements. This theme carried through other facility conversations as the Board identified district-wide priorities.

The Board discussed the importance of establishing clear priorities and aligning decisions to those priorities before approving additional projects or commitments. The following themes were identified as central:

- Safety
- Trust, including community trust and confidence
- Fiscal responsibility

West Campus and Program Use

The group discussed the current use of the West Campus. Overall safety at West Campus was identified as a key issue for further evaluation.

Ten-Year Capital Planning Discussion

Items referenced in the discussion included:

- RMMS cafeteria expansion
- RMMS portables/classroom expansion
- Midway Elementary School
- Wasatch High School improvements
- J.R. Smith Elementary
- Teacher housing options
- WHS arts facilities, including sound and lighting needs
- West Campus currently houses Alternative School, Online School, Technology Department, Transition College, Weight Room, JROTC, and classrooms

The group emphasized that developing a clear 10-year plan could help build trust in the community by demonstrating disciplined planning, prioritization, and transparency.

Community Impact

The Board discussed the community impact of future capital decisions, including the balance between maintaining sufficient resources for district priorities and considering the tax burden on residents. Discussion reflected differing perspectives regarding the appropriate use of funds, collectively agreeing that they should be fiscally responsible in all of their decisions. Board Member Ehlert expressed the view that a portion of funds should be returned to taxpayers where possible, noting the importance of recognizing that these funds originate from the community. Board Member Holmes cautioned that returning funds could create the need for future bonding and may reduce the district's ability to fund important student-centered priorities as needs arise. Board President Dickerson noted concern that, given the current political climate, a future bond may be difficult to pass, underscoring the importance of careful planning and maintaining adequate financial capacity. Board Member Dedrickson emphasized the importance of communication and transparency in building trust with teachers and the community. Board Member Collett added that celebrating progress and positive steps should also be part of the district's communication efforts.

Adjournment

The work session concluded at 3:45 p.m.