



**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Washington County School District**  
**121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah**  
**March 2, 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 Superintendent Richard Holmes.

**Board Member Hammer presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:06 p.m. Board Member Wade 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, Student Services Director Brad Christensen, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer*

**A. CLOSED SESSION**

1. Property and Personnel Items

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 2:35 p.m. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

**FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING**

**Policy 4100 Graduation Requirements/School Credits – Rusty Taylor**

Rusty Taylor shared the proposed changes to Policy 4100 Graduation Requirements/School Credits. The change increases the high school credits from 27 to 28 for 4x4 block schools and from 34-35 credits for schools on the 5x5 block and creates a new honors diploma to encourage students to take more rigorous coursework. The honors diploma requires students to complete six college-level courses across English, math, science, social studies, and electives aligned with Utah Tech's GE certificate. Unlike traditional honors, the diploma will not have a GPA requirement to avoid excluding students who take rigorous classes but earn modest grades. The District proposed providing honors stoles at graduation, funded by the District and reused annually, to publicly recognize achievements of those students. Policy revisions also clarify credit requirements for alternative diplomas, course forgiveness, and adult education

pathways. The revised policy aims to increase enrollment in advanced courses, reversing declines seen after the Regents Scholarship ended. Counselors and administrators support the policy changes, emphasizing increased student access and motivation for challenging classes. The District will continue to refine wording and visuals with input from schools and ensure clarity.

## **WORK SESSION**

### **Board PLC Training – Steve Gregoire**

Steve Gregoire the results of collaboration from Bloomington Hills Elementary and South Mesa Elementary. In the video, Principal Wheeler shared RISE score information from 4<sup>th</sup> grade. RISE measures math, science, and reading. They improved from 45% to 55%. The team is committed to student learning and they are collaborating. Principal Nobis shared the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade results. They have grown from 62% in 2022 to 88% in 2025. They were one of a few schools to reach 70% on Acadience. They worked to align the standards and are sharing data.

### **2026-27 Fee Schedule and Spend Plans – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills reviewed the 2026-27 Fee Schedule and Spend Plan information. Proposed changes include increasing the Math Counts fee to \$40, adding a \$50 fee for the Emergency Responder Program, a \$62 fee for Health Science Externship, \$25 fee for Unmanned Aerial Systems, raising the JROTC CIA trip fee from \$800 to \$1,000 due to rising travel and lodging costs, with fundraising covering much of the expense, a \$40 fee for JROTC PT Gear, increasing the JROTC uniform cleaning fee to \$50, and increasing the Grade Replacement/Class Retake fee to \$75.00. The district plans to switch to a 3% credit card fee (up from \$1.50 flat) for online payments to cover rising processing costs, still allowing cash and check payments to avoid burdening families. It was mentioned that the management of out-of-state trip fees capped at \$650 every three years per program is complicated by students participating in multiple programs. The fee schedule update aims to maintain program access while addressing rising operational expenses and avoiding undue financial burden on families.

### **Pine View High Update – Brett Gifford**

Principal Brett Gifford shared information on a proposed change to a 4x4 schedule. Decision to adopt 4x4 schedule was based on data showing limited proficiency gains under 5x5, especially with math and language arts despite daily instruction. The 5x5 schedule allowed for a study skills class led by paraprofessionals, which was less effective than direct teacher interventions planned in the new schedule. Teachers favored 4x4 as it offers longer class periods (84 minutes vs. 63) and fewer daily classes to prepare for, reducing chaos and improving planning. Alignment with other schools and concurrent enrollment schedules was a key driver to adopt 4x4, addressing student scheduling conflicts with Utah Tech and Dixie Tech. Teacher and student engagement challenges with 85-minute blocks are acknowledged, with strategies to keep students active including labs, activities, and breaks during lessons. Special emphasis on math and language arts teaching focuses on essential skills and deeper learning instead of covering excessive content superficially. The new schedule incorporates intervention time within class periods for tier 2 support, replacing the previous lunch or after-school intervention model.

### **Out-of-State Travel Fees – Rusty Taylor**

Discussed as part of the 2026-2027 Fee Schedule and Spend Plans.

### **AP/CE Discussion – Cheri Stevenson**

Cheri Stevenson shared the difference and trends between Concurrent Enrollment (CE) and AP. The District has a partnership with Utah Tech University. CE courses guarantee college credit upon passing with grades reflected on college transcripts, ideal for students planning in-state public or private university attendance. AP courses require passing a national AP exam for college credit, recognized more widely across states and private institutions but carry higher risk of no credit if exam scores are low. Last year, 8,942 concurrent enrollment courses were taken by 4,453 students, compared to 1,938 AP courses by 1,264 students, showing CE's growing popularity. Counselors guide students to select CE or AP based on their intended college destination, maximizing credit transfer and reducing retake needs. AP credits are more

widely accepted nationally but do not affect high school GPA; CE credits include letter grades that impact GPA but may have limited out-of-state transferability.

### **Title I Update – Susan Harrah**

Susan Harrah shared the Title I schools for 2026-27. Title I funding allocations are guided by federal poverty data, with adjustments made based on school thresholds and administrative changes. The district uses a 60% poverty threshold to determine Title I eligibility, selecting schools in rank order based on federal data from January. Some schools like Heritage and LaVerkin have fallen below 50-55% poverty levels, affecting their funding status, attributed partly to families not completing free/reduced lunch forms. Red Mountain was added this year. Water Canyon, previously ranked highest with over 84% poverty, dropped below threshold, possibly due to underreporting on forms and decreased enrollment. Title I funds are allocated as a lump sum split among eligible schools, with flexibility to adjust the number of schools served. The district plans outreach efforts to encourage accurate form completion to maintain funding levels, especially for schools near the cutoff. School staffing and planning are aligned with Title I status to ensure effective use of funds and support for high-poverty student populations.

### **Sharp Survey – Jon Butler**

Superintendent Richard Holmes said the survey will not be given this year. It is given every other year. The survey is given in 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The information is used heavily by our partners for grant funds to help kids. Parents have to opt in for the student to take the survey. We do have the ability to edit questions if needed. Cheri Stevenson said the health-related information help us with risk factors and protective measures.

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

Superintendent Richard Holmes expressed appreciation for the Board attending the legislative sessions and for the respectful manner when talking with the legislators.

### **Educator Engagement Survey – Jeremy Cox**

Jeremy Cox reported on the Educator Engagement Survey from the state. The survey opens March 2 and runs through March 31, inviting all educators to share anonymous feedback on mentorship quality, principal support, collaboration, and workload fairness. Questions address the impact of mentoring on teacher transition and instructional practice, with clarifications linking mentors to learning coaches. Additional items assess principal communication, encouragement of innovation, care for staff wellbeing, and support for student discipline challenges. Open text questions solicit strengths and improvement areas for school leadership, providing rich qualitative data. Survey completion time is estimated at 20-30 minutes. Results will be reported by school level (elementary, middle, high), not by individual schools, to guide district-wide and state-level decision-making. The district crafted a communication letter emphasizing the survey's importance for legislative advocacy and school improvement.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD**

### **Board Committee Discussions**

Craig Seegmiller and Brent Bills reported that the auditor is working on the audit report for the Audit Committee.

LaRene Cox reported on a visit to Water Canyon. Stan DeMille will need to be replaced on the board. They are also working on where the pipes need to be laid for the right-of-way.

Burke Staheli reported on the Freeport West development. It has created more roads to the airport and is bringing jobs.

Ron Wade reported on attending the Safety Committee Meeting.

Heidi Gunn shared notes from the February USBA meeting. They would like any suggested ideas for presenters next year. She mentioned the upcoming USBA Regional Meeting. The USBA will be doing a dinner at NSBA for those attending. She said that USBA is anxious to hear about the experience from those who attend COSSBA.

## **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 Wade
2. Welcome – Board President Stirland
3. Pledge of Allegiance by Member Seegmiller

#### **PUBLIC HEARING – 2026-2027 SCHOOL SPEND PLANS AND SCHOOL FEE SCHEDULE**

**The Washington County School District will hold a Public Hearing on March 2, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. to receive public comments on the proposed 2026-2027 School Spend Plans and School Fee Schedule.**

Brent Bills reviewed the proposed school fees changes for 2026-2027.

- Math Counts school fee raised from \$30 to \$40 due to increased program costs.
- Added fees for new classes including CAD 3D printing, emergency responder, health science externship, and unmanned aerial systems.
- Machinery included to support local demand for machinists, aligned with CT High School and Dixie Tech certifications.
- JROTC fee restructuring separates uniform fees from program fees to clarify charges.
- Uniform cleaning fee increased to \$50, still below actual cleaning costs, with fundraising offsetting expenses.
- JROTC CIA increase from \$800 to \$1000.
- A new CTSO state competition fee up to \$50 is proposed, pending legal review.
- Grade replacement fee raised to \$75 for retaking classes beyond the first free attempt.
- Credit card transaction fee switched from flat \$1.50 to 3% to align with industry standards, with cash/check options remaining.
- The out-of-state trip fee of \$650, currently limited to once every three years, is under review due to multiple trip opportunities creating billing challenges for schools.

Fee schedules will be posted online for public review.

No public comments were given.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Minutes
  - a. February 9, 2026 Meeting of the Board of Education
2. Financial Report
3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items
4. UHSAA 150-Mile Requests

Brent Bills mentioned that being so early in the month there is no Financial Report to approve.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items 1, 3, and 4.**

**Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

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

##### **Three Falls Elementary – Principal Jennifer Eggleston**

Principal Jennifer Eggleston and several students shared what is right at Three Falls Elementary School. The school offers dual immersion in Chinese and Spanish. The students shared some of the language experiences and cultural activities they have been doing. The motto at Three Falls Elementary is “Soar.”

For the past three years they have focused on “Soar for growth.” They have achieved commendable growth on state report, with all but one grade level meeting or exceeding 75% proficiency targets in Acadience reading and math. Their kindergarten proficiency increased by 36%, and first grade showed 94% growth, reflecting effective teaching and teamwork among 78 staff members. Three Falls Elementary will be turning 30 years old next year and will celebrate with a party.

#### **Pine View Intermediate School – Principal Brandon Yost**

Principal Brandon Yost and Asst. Principal Lee Finlinson shared what is right at Pine View Intermediate School. The student council prepared a video with clips about things they like at the school. They have done a "Focus 44" initiative to pair 11 staff members with four high-risk students each to provide mentoring throughout the year. They have an AmeriCorps staff member who targets attendance improvement for at-risk students and have co-taught special education services. Each month they have a new student lunch and bring in pizza to welcome them to the school. Their “Panther Time” offers targeted interventions and enrichment activities. They also have student council, Lego League, and Math Counts, Hope Squad, student recognition, and school spirit initiatives to foster positive culture. The monthly Student of the Month program includes awards, celebrations, and parent engagement to boost motivation. They have celebrated nearly 70% of students for maintaining or improving grades and meeting GPA standards. They have spirit assemblies feature student performances, music groups, motivational speakers, and community sponsorships, enhancing school unity and pride. They also have an award-winning theater program led by State Teacher of the Year Emily Holt. They have worked with the cone-site and contributed over \$3000 to the PVHS fundraiser helping a family in need.

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

No public comments were given on Board Action Items.

#### **BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

##### **Water Canyon RFP – Bryan Dyer**

Brent Bills reported on the Water Canyon expansion which includes a new cafeteria and additional classrooms to remove portables. The architect and selected CMGC will be able to move forward on the design to keep the costs down overall. The committee recommendation is to award the CMGC contract to Bud Mahas Construction.

**Board Member Hammer presented a motion to approve the selection of Bud Mahas for the Water Canyon expansion. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

##### **Insurance Renewal – Tammara Robinson**

Tammara Robinson shared the recommendation of the Insurance Committee to increase the insurance premiums by 3% . There is also an admin fee increase of \$1.15 per employee per month with the medical and a \$.10 cent increase on our dental.

**Board Member Cox presented a motion to approve the Insurance Renewal as presented. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

##### **Policy 9710 School LAND Trust Program – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 9710 School LAND Trust Program. The policy is being updated for compliance with state deadlines. Revised reporting dates ensure fall council membership, assurance forms, and website postings due by October 20, final reports by January 31, plan submissions to the Board in March, and board approvals in the April meetings.

**Board Member Wade presented a motion to approve the Policy 9710 School LAND Trust Program. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

##### **CTE Property – Brent Bills**

Brent Bills said we have not received any offers yet so no approval is needed. He explained that the home was built by students in the CTE Construction program for the Parade of Homes. Additional lots have already been purchased for future homes. There was no motion made on this item.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Policy 4100 Graduation Requirements/School Credits – Rusty Taylor**

Rusty Taylor presented the proposed changes to Policy 4100 Graduation Requirements/School Credits. The policy is being adjusted for new state mandates and an honors diploma introduction. The US Government class has been extended to a full year adding an additional .5 Social Studies credit and an additional .5 elective credit would be added, increasing credits for 4x4 schedule schools from 27 to 28 and 5x5 schedule schools from 34 to 35. The changes also introduce an Honors Diploma pathway to encourage rigor and higher education readiness. Honors diploma requires completion of advanced language arts, math, science, and social studies courses plus additional classes. Policy includes proposal for honors stoles and diploma recognition to motivate students seeking academic distinction.

### **Policy 1460 Professional Growth (Recommendation to Delete) – Brian Stevenson**

### **Policy 9840 Outcome-Based Education (Recommendation to Delete) – Brian Stevenson**

Brian Stevenson proposed that both Policy 1460 Professional Growth and Policy 9840 Outcome-Based Education be eliminated due to redundancy and outdated content. District Policy 1460 Professional Growth is covered comprehensively under Educator Effectiveness policy, making it obsolete. Policy 9840 Outcome-Based Education is incomplete and replaced by the Professional Learning Community Resolution. The policies will have a 30-day review period for comments.

### **Policy 0006 Board Resolution for Digital Teaching and Learning – Jeremy Cox**

The Digital Teaching and Learning policy discussion was deferred pending legislative session outcomes.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

There were no information items.

## **REPORTS**

### **Superintendent**

Superintendent Richard Holmes recognized Ben Meier from Pine View Middle School and Jacquie Tuitavuki from South Mesa Elementary who received the Founders Five civics award from the state. They were only two of eight teachers to receive the award for their exceptional commitment to civics education, especially in the 250<sup>th</sup> year of our nation's founding.

Superintendent Richard Holmes said each year we have schools identified as needing help in certain areas. The designation is called TSI or ATSI. Many times, it is in areas that we have small numbers of students. Schools work really hard to get out of those categories. He said nine of our schools were able to get out of TSI. He recognized Randy Richardson for the work he does in putting together a plan and working with Brian Stevenson to help those schools. The following schools exited: Bloomington Hills Elementary, Red Mountain Elementary, Crimson Cliffs High School, Snow Canyon Middle School, Lava Ridge Intermediate, Hurricane Intermediate, Diamond Valley Elementary, Desert Hills High School, and Majestic Fields Elementary. Randy Richardson as well as Stephen Ord and Brett Gifford of Pine View High School, and Gina Eves and Dan Mckeehan of Hurricane High School were also recognized for their work with ELL students in Advanced Placement, Concurrent Enrollment, and CTE courses. They had a high number of ELL students enroll in those courses. Other high schools in the District are taking note and bringing parents in so they can see what is offered for students.

### **Board**

No reports were given.

### **Association**

Annette Merchant, WCEA, recognized Crystal Doty and Christie Chandler with the WCEA Public Service Hero award. Crystal Dodie, a third-grade teacher at Three Falls, recognized for creative, hands-on teaching that boosts student confidence and academic growth. Students shared personal stories crediting her with improved math and reading skills and fostering a love of learning.

Christy Chandler, an art teacher at Pine View Intermediate, honored for encouraging artistic expression across all student groups, including special education. Her students have earned local and state art awards, with one special needs student winning a city-wide contest.

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

Brittnie Bonham, Snow Canyon Council, shared some of the things happening in the Snow Canyon schools. Arrowhead PTA had a bake sale to help their PE coach. The kids and families really showed their support and it was a huge success. They also held a STOP Assembly as part of White Ribbon Week. It was a fun way to teach the kids about the importance of Internet safety. They also have a Meet the Master's Art Program with room moms helping to teach classes about the artists. Sunset Elementary shared that they have PTA volunteers who dress up as their mascot Sunny the Stallion and do award assemblies every month. They have a PTA store where students who earn horseshoes from teachers can buy things. They also provide snacks and dinner for teachers during parent teacher conferences. Santa Clara Elementary did a book fair event and a "Doughnuts and a Date" event. Every student and their date get a free doughnut and they encourage them to come support the book fair. They have had some of the local first responders come to hand out doughnuts to create some camaraderie with the school community. Lava Ridge Intermediate had their Lava Card fundraiser to help with grants for teachers. They are also hoping to help with the projector and screen for the gym. They served carne asada tacos to teachers on parent teacher conference day. That is something they do in the cone-site to help teachers on that long day with some snacks. She mentioned that all the schools collaborate for Red Ribbon Week in the fall and White Ribbon Week in February. The theme for White Ribbon Week this year was, *In a world where you can be anything, be kind*. Most of the schools did a kindness chain where students could write down kindnesses they observed. They send home challenge sheets for families to do. They also held a parent night where Detective Layton shared about the harmful effects of social media on kids.

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

No public comments were given.

**Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:42 p.m. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**