



SPECIAL MEETING - Apr 14 2026 Minutes

Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 5:30 PM

IRON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2077 West Royal Hunte Drive Cedar City, Utah

A. MEETING OPENING

1. Call to Order
At 5:30 p.m. President Taylor called the meeting to order.
2. Prayer/Thought
President Taylor offered a thought.
3. Pledge of Allegiance
Ms. Hill led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. INFORMATION

1. Candidate Interviews
Experience and Qualifications

Jennifer Sullivan introduced herself as a candidate for the Iron County School District Board of Education. She shared that she is a parent of school-aged children, a grandparent, business owner, consultant, and active community volunteer involved with the library board, community council, PTO, and other local organizations.

She explained that her passion for education grew from advocating for her children, both of whom have dyslexia, and learning about literacy supports and intervention programs. She described becoming deeply involved in school improvement efforts through community council and School Land Trust work. Sullivan emphasized her commitment to collaboration, giving back to the community that supported her family during a difficult time, and helping all students succeed. She concluded by noting her daughter's significant reading progress as an example of what the district can accomplish.

Helaman Haynie stated that his experience includes attending Iron County schools as a student and having a positive educational experience. He emphasized the importance of setting high expectations and holding both students and teachers accountable to achieve strong outcomes. He described his qualifications as being honest, hardworking, community-minded, and actively involved in youth sports, including serving as a boys

basketball coach at Parowan High School. He added that he would bring a level-headed, common-sense approach to challenging or sensitive issues.

Vickie Hicks explained that she was encouraged by community members to apply for the school board position after returning from travel and felt prompted to serve. She shared that she has been married for 52 years, has five children, and has one child who attended Parowan schools from kindergarten through graduation.

She described extensive leadership and community service experience, including 47 years as a 7-Eleven franchise owner, service on a national franchise board, HOA treasurer roles, president of the local pickleball club, and involvement in a philanthropic community organization. She has also served as PTO president, helped fundraise for school improvements such as playgrounds and Chromebooks, organized school events, worked as a substitute teacher, and served four years on the city council.

Vickie said these experiences gave her insight into classroom needs, budgeting, and governance. She emphasized that she is a hardworking person who takes responsibilities seriously and would welcome the opportunity to serve on the board.

Why are you interested in serving on the Board?

Helaman said he is interested in serving on the school board as a way to become more involved in the community and gain a better understanding of the relationship between the board, district, and community. He expressed a desire to give back and participate in ways he might not otherwise pursue. As a parent, he also feels a responsibility to stay informed about school matters so he can better guide his children to work hard, be kind, and show respect.

Vickie said she is interested in serving on the board because she still has great-grandchildren attending schools in Parowan and cares deeply about the district. She shared that her time volunteering in schools was especially meaningful and gave her a sense that she could make a difference. She wants to support students, help parents navigate school issues, and contribute to policies that promote respect, good character, and student success. She also emphasized the importance of clear communication with parents and helping them understand district decisions.

Jennifer said she wants to serve on the board to support students, teachers, and the school board while helping rebuild trust between the district and the community. She emphasized the need for greater transparency and stronger relationships.

When asked how she would rebuild trust, Jennifer suggested working collaboratively with the board to create a stronger communication strategy, including more proactive use of social media to share accurate information, district plans, and opportunities for community involvement. She also stressed the importance of board members being visible at schools and community events, believing that consistent presence, openness, and communication would help restore confidence and strengthen relationships.

The Board allowed the other two candidates to answer the question of how they would rebuild trust as well.

Helaman said communication is important, but acknowledged that as a parent he generally trusts the school system and tends to be hands-off unless an issue arises with his own children. Because of that, he does not always know about concerns between the community, board, and district. If serving on the board, he said he would approach concerns one issue at a time, address them directly, and focus on the fact that most community members value the schools and the education being provided.

Vickie said she believes most people in the community are supportive of the schools, though there will always be some concerns or complaints. She emphasized the importance of focusing on what benefits the broader community rather than allowing individual issues to become disproportionate. She said board members should listen carefully, help people follow the proper channels to address concerns, explain the board's role and limitations, and ensure community members feel heard and respected.

The ICSD mission is to support families in developing college and career readiness by building knowledge, skills and relationships for all. As a board member how would you help ICSD achieve this mission?

Vickie emphasized the importance of college and career readiness and suggested that board members should directly engage with students to better understand their needs. She said teachers play a key role in building student knowledge, but the board should help ensure students—especially those with special needs—are connected to the right resources and support. She stressed that every student should have the opportunity to succeed and receive the guidance needed to reach their goals.

Jennifer indicated she wants to protect and continue existing college and career readiness programs in the district, emphasizing how valuable they are for students. She noted the importance of reviewing the budget to ensure these programs can be sustained and ideally expanded, including opportunities for students to earn college credit through SUU and Southwest Tech while still in high school. She also raised concern about transportation barriers that have made some programs harder for students to access, and said she would work to improve or find solutions for transportation so more students can participate.

Helaman said that student support begins at home, and he acknowledged that not all students have the same level of support from their families. He expressed gratitude for having strong parental support growing up and suggested that schools should find ways to identify students who may need additional help due to outside circumstances. He emphasized the importance of schools and educators serving as a positive, encouraging influence for those students to help build their confidence and support their success.

Which of the six district values do you believe is a strength for you and why?

Jennifer said that transparency is her top priority in serving on the school board. She emphasized that being open and honest with the community is essential, even if it sometimes means sharing too much or getting into the details. She stated that without transparency, trust is lost, and she believes it is foundational to everything the board does, while also noting that she still values kindness in her approach.

Helaman said he believes in setting high expectations for students and encouraging them to achieve their personal best. He shared a quote about aiming high and explained that success looks different for every child depending on their abilities and circumstances. Using his own children as an example, he emphasized that expectations should be individualized but consistently maintained for all students at every level.

Vickie said she values collaboration as the most important quality for the school board. She emphasized that raising and educating children requires teamwork among all stakeholders and that board members must work together respectfully, even when individual views differ. She noted that once decisions are made, they should reflect the collective will of the board and help maintain unity within both the board and the broader community.

President Taylor outlined the process for the next part of the interview, explaining that each board member will ask their own questions and the candidates will respond in turn. For Stephanie's question, candidates were instructed to select and respond to one question on a list she distributed.

Helaman selected question #8: How should the district respond to ongoing challenges with special education funding and compliance requirements?

He shared personal experience as a parent of a special needs child with epilepsy and global delays, noting that his child has benefited from the district's special education services and flexible class placement. He indicated that the district should respond to special education challenges by strongly advocating for students, recognizing that each child has different needs, and working diligently to provide individualized support and resources so every student has the best opportunity to succeed.

Vickie chose the question, *How would you navigate situations where state education mandates conflict with local community values or district priorities?*

She said the district should focus on communication and transparency when state mandates conflict with local values. She emphasized helping parents understand that some requirements come from state law and clearly explaining the reasons behind district priorities and how decisions are made. She noted that most parents are focused on daily life until issues arise, so it is important for the district to proactively and calmly explain decisions and provide guidance on where concerns can be directed.

Jennifer chose the question that asked her to *identify her top priorities and describe how she would measure success for the district's long-term vision.*

She identified three main priorities: managing district growth and school capacity, improving student achievement in literacy and math, and increasing student attendance. She noted that growth will likely require difficult decisions such as bonds or additional facilities to prevent overcrowding. She emphasized supporting students who are behind in reading and math, including those with learning challenges, and said improving early literacy is critical. Her third priority is addressing attendance concerns. She said success would be measured by avoiding overcrowded schools, improving academic outcomes in literacy and math, and increasing overall student attendance rates.

What do you see is the difference between a school board member's role and a school administrator's role? Can you give an example of when a board member should not get involved?

Vickie explained that school board members should focus on district-wide priorities rather than becoming involved in individual parent or student issues, which should be handled through school staff and administrative channels. She said concerns should move through the proper chain of communication rather than going directly to the board. She also emphasized that the board's role is to focus on all students, supporting overall school needs, graduation success, and preparing students for college or career pathways, including trades. She stressed the importance of ensuring students are educated, respectful and able to become successful, self-sufficient adults.

Jennifer said the school board's role is to support administration by hiring and collaborating with leadership, such as the superintendent and business administrator, and ensuring policies are followed while asking questions to understand how to best support the district. She stressed that micromanaging staff is not appropriate for board members, whose role is to support rather than run the district.

Helaman explained that the school board's role is to set and enforce policy while trusting the superintendent and staff to handle day-to-day administration and decisions. Board members should listen to community concerns, but also encourage families to work directly through the proper channels—teachers, principals, and their own children—so issues can be addressed with full context. He emphasized that the board should not jump into individual disputes or act as a mediator without all facts, but instead promote communication and trust in the system while supporting appropriate resolution paths.

Is the role of a board member to advocate for specific outcomes or to ensure a fair and effective process? And why?

Jennifer said a school board member should focus on fairness and effectiveness for the entire community rather than personal agendas or individual preferences. She

emphasized that decisions should be guided by what is best for students, families, and the broader community based on input from parents and other stakeholders. In her view, board members should actively gather community feedback, understand what people are asking for, and then use that collective input to make balanced decisions that serve the common good rather than individual interests.

Helaman said school board members should not base their involvement or satisfaction on whether outcomes match personal expectations. Instead, they should focus on following and enforcing established processes and trusting decisions made by the board and district officials. He emphasized that board members should not pursue personal agendas, but rather support and uphold the decisions and systems already in place.

Vickie emphasized that board decisions should focus on fair and effective outcomes for everyone, not personal agendas. Drawing from her city council experience, she warned that individual agendas can damage teamwork and create conflict. She stressed that board members must work as a unified team, accept decisions even when they are difficult or unpopular, and support one another. In her view, holding a personal agenda in a public office undermines the responsibility and oath of the role, which requires prioritizing the community over individual interests.

If you were faced with going through truth and taxation because the district asked you to support them for a myriad of projects or things they need at the school so that the state and especially so the state would match the guaranteed funds, how would you vote and why?

Helaman said he would vote yes on the issue and then work to clearly explain the reasoning to the community. He acknowledged that taxes are a personal concern, especially given his own financial situation, but he also recognized the need for adequate school funding to ensure students have proper facilities and resources. He expressed that if the board is well-informed and makes a decision based on student needs, he is willing to support it and accept any public criticism that comes with it.

Vickie said she'd want to understand exactly what the money is for before voting. If the district can clearly show it's a real need for students and schools, she'd support it and wouldn't worry about backlash. But if the justification isn't strong, she wouldn't be quick to vote yes. She described herself as pretty analytical and said she'd carefully weigh whether it's truly necessary and how it impacts the community before deciding.

Jennifer said she would need a lot more information and clear transparency before making a decision, especially about how it would impact different taxpayers and income levels. She stressed that the community should understand it as a last resort after other funding options, like bonds, have been considered. She also said the district should carefully review its financial plan first. However, if the loss of state funding was significant and unavoidable, she said she would ultimately vote yes.

Tell me about a time you changed your mind on an important issue and what led to the shift.

Vickie said she's open to hearing both sides and making decisions based on evidence and real community impact, not just a set position. She shared that she's changed her mind before after listening to the community and doing her own research. Overall, she emphasized she's not strictly "yes or no," but willing to adjust her view if she's shown a better approach or alternative that benefits the community more.

Jennifer said she originally strongly supported a four-day school week because it worked well for her family, but her view has changed after hearing from other parents and doing more research. She now recognizes it may not work for everyone, especially families with younger children, and is more open to other perspectives. Overall, she explained that she moved from a firm "this is the only way" mindset to being more balanced and willing to consider different viewpoints.

Helaman didn't point to a specific situation, but said that when facing an important issue, the key is to gather as many facts as possible, weigh the pros and cons, and then work collaboratively as a team to make a decision.

Describe your approach to working with others who have different viewpoints than your own.

Jennifer said she sees disagreement as a normal and even valuable part of teamwork, because it leads to better decisions when handled well. She emphasized the importance of staying respectful, listening to other perspectives, and being willing to learn from them, even when it challenges your own views. In her view, discussions should stay focused on shared goals—what's best for students and the community—and avoid becoming personal, since there are often multiple valid ways to reach good outcomes.

Helaman said that disagreements are normal in group settings, like they are in sports teams, but success comes from everyone working toward the same goal. If differences arise, he would focus on the school district's mission and values to guide decisions. He emphasized that choices should align with those shared values, even when individual priorities or opinions differ.

Vickie emphasized that the board should function as a unified team focused on students and schools, not personal opinions or conflicts. She said disagreements are normal, but once decisions are made, members should support each other publicly and avoid showing frustration or negativity, since others are always watching.

In the Oath of Office, it states that, "I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity". To what and who is fidelity sworn, and what does that mean to you?

Vickie said fidelity means being honest, upright, and true to her community, family, and church. She emphasized the importance of honoring the oath taken as a board member and fully committing to serve students, schools, administration, and fellow board members.

Jennifer said fidelity means being able to end the day feeling confident and at peace with her decisions. She emphasized accountability—being comfortable explaining her actions to anyone at any time—and making choices she stands behind without regret or doubt.

Helaman said fidelity means first understanding the U.S. and Utah Constitutions, and then applying them to the local community. He emphasized doing his best to make decisions and carry out responsibilities in a way that reflects and upholds the values and principles in those governing documents.

If you had a magic wand and there's something that's kind of been bothering you at the district and you could make a change, what would you change?

Jennifer said the biggest challenge is the budget limitation, which she finds frustrating because costs keep rising faster than funding. She noted that the district is doing the best it can financially, even though it's a difficult situation. Overall, she expressed that despite budget constraints, she feels very fortunate about the quality of the district compared to others she has experienced, and believes it is generally in a strong place with only a few financial challenges to work through over time.

Helaman said he doesn't see major internal issues but has heard rumors and noticed a disconnect between what the district is trying to do and what the community understands. His "magic wand" would improve communication and public understanding so the community is better informed and more supportive of district needs, like funding and school construction.

Vickie said she loves the schools here so much. She indicated that she doesn't have complaints about how things have been run and feels the school board has generally done a good job supporting students and families. If she had a "magic wand," she would take the pressure off board members for a short time so they could step back, breathe, and just be families without the stress of their responsibilities.

What would a graduate look like in 10 years based on their education from us?

Helaman described a successful graduate 10 years out as someone whose path may vary, but who has the basics to succeed in life—like the ability to study, be kind and respectful, and function well in work and relationships. He emphasized that beyond academics, graduates need drive and ambition: the motivation to set goals, push themselves, and keep improving regardless of their background or circumstances.

Vickie described a successful graduate at age 28 as someone who is grounded and stable in life. She emphasized that they've taken the education, values, and community

connections learned in school and used them to build their future. They are just beginning adulthood in a meaningful way—forming families, building careers, and moving forward with the opportunities they were given in school.

Jennifer described a successful 28-year-old graduate as someone who has found a stable, independent path—whether through college, technical training, or career programs started in high school. She emphasized financial stability, ideally with minimal student debt, and becoming a respected, self-sufficient, and healthy member of the community. For those pursuing advanced degrees, she sees them still progressing with continued support along the way.

C. ACTION

1. Appointment of Board Member

Mrs. Ralph made a motion to have a five minute recess. Mrs. Christiansen seconded the motion and the Board members passed it unanimously.

Mrs. Christiansen made a motion to appoint Jennifer Sullivan. The motion failed due to the lack of a second.

Mr. Eddy made a motion to appoint Helaman Haynie. Ms. Hill seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Tiffiney Christiansen - nay

Megen Ralphs - nay

Stephanie Hill - aye

Michelle Tullis - aye

Tyrel Eddy - aye

John Taylor- aye

With a 5-2 vote in favor of the motion, Helaman Haynie is appointed as board member for District 2.

D. SWEARING IN

1. Administration of the Oath of Office

Business Administrator Todd Hess administered the Oath of Office to Helaman Haynie.

E. ADJOURNMENT

1. Adjourn the Meeting

At 7: 28 p.m. Vice-President Tullis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hill seconded the motion and the board members passed it unanimously.

Board President

Business Administrator