



## Board of Education Meeting - May 12, 2026 Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 6:00 PM

Tooele County School District 92 Lodestone Way Tooele, Utah 84074

***THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT YET BEEN FORMALLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND, UNTIL SUCH FORMAL APPROVAL, ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE***

### 1. **Executive Session, 5:15 pm (Closed to Public)**

At 5:15 pm, a motion to enter executive session was made.

**Board Members Present:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, Scott Bryan, Emily Syphus, Elizabeth Smith, ValaRee Shields(5:18 pm)

**Excused:** Todd Thompson

**Administration Present:** Dr. Mark Ernst, Jeremy Walker, Dr. Cody Reutzel, Dr. Sarah Jarnagin, Terry Christensen, Jackie Gallegos

**Excused:** Dr. Jeff Hamm

- 1.1 Purchase, Exchange, or Release of Real Property
- 1.2 Pending or Reasonably Imminent Litigation
- 1.3 Character, Professional Competence, or Physical or Mental Health of an Individual

### 2. **Business Meeting 6:00 pm (Start of Public Meeting)**

**Board Members Present:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, Scott Bryan, ValaRee Shields

**Excused:** Todd Thompson

**Administration Present:** Dr. Mark Ernst, Superintendent; Jeremy Walker, Business Administrator; Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Sarah Jarnagin, Stansbury Area Director; Brad Hranicky, Tooele Area Director; Angie Gillette, Grantsville Area Director; Heather Castagno, Student Services Director; Marissa Lowry, Special Education Director;

- 2.1 Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

At 6:01 pm, Melissa Rich, President, called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance

### 3. **Recognition and Good News**

- 3.1 Recognition of 2026 Valedictorian and Salutatorians

The Board recognized the following 2026 Valedictorians and Salutatorians:

- **Dugway High School**
  - Garrett Vincent Pace, *Valedictorian*
  - Quaid Elton, *Salutatorian*
- **Tooele High School**
  - Porter Montague, *Valedictorian*
  - Carter Hatch, *Salutatorian*
  - Michael Smurthwaite, *Salutatorian*
- **Grantsville High School**
  - Emma Yardley, *Valedictorian*
  - Brynlie Chidester, *Salutatorian*
- **Wendover High School**
  - Shelton Burton, *Valedictorian*
  - Benjamin Ortiz Romero, *Salutatorian*
- **Stansbury High School**
  - Weston Bruderer, *Valedictorian*
  - Maren Porter, *Salutatorian*
  - Eli Howarth, *Salutatorian*

**4. Open Forum (Limited to three minutes per individual and a total of 30 minutes for all comments. To speak, sign up at the clerk's desk prior to the start of the open forum.)**

4.1 Patron Comments

- Lisa Johnson

**5. Academics**

5.1 Academic Improvement Year-End Review

Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent, and Curriculum Director Shonie Guymon provided a comprehensive year-end update on district instructional priorities and student achievement. Dr. Reutzel outlined progress across several key initiatives, including secondary literacy interventions, early mathematics and literacy excellence planning, and the use of classroom calibration observations to strengthen instructional consistency. He also reported on ongoing work to refine the high school administrative model to enhance instructional leadership and student support. Ms. Guymon highlighted significant gains in early learning, noting a 26-percentage-point increase in kindergarten proficiency through the Kindergarten Excellence initiative, and reported that 80% of first-grade students met the on-level mid-year benchmark for whole words read as part of the First Grade Excellence initiative.

**6. Consent Items**

6.1 Minutes

Point of Contact: Jackie Gallegos, Board Clerk

[Board of Education Meeting - Apr 21 2026 - Minutes - Html](#) 

6.2 Expenditure Report

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	Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director	
	<a href="#">April Board Expenditure Report.pdf</a> 	
6.3	Revenue Report	#
	Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director	
	<a href="#">April Board Revenue Report.pdf</a> 	
6.4	Disbursement Report	#
	Point of Contact: Kristen Evans, Accounts Payable	
	<a href="#">4.26 Disbursement Report.pdf</a> 	
6.5	Financial Reports	#
	Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director	
	<a href="#">March Combined Financial Statements.pdf</a> 	
6.6	Personnel Decisions	#
	Point of Contact: Charles Hansen, Director of Human Resources	
	<a href="#">April Personnel Decisions 2026.pdf</a> 	
6.7	Policy	#
	Point of Contact: Chantel Cowan, Director of Policy and Math Curriculum	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rescind Policy 6027 as Policy 6035, Safe Schools: Discipline of Students with Disabilities, fully encompasses its provisions.</li> </ul>	
	<a href="#">6027 Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion</a> 	
	<a href="#">6035 Safe Schools: Discipline of Students with Disabilities</a> 	
6.8	Surplus Items	#
	Point of Contact: Emily Spendlove, Fixed Assets	
	<a href="#">Memo surplus to board 26-5-6.pdf</a> 	
6.9	Request for Proposal/Invitation for Bid	#
	Point of Contact: Jill Whiting, Budget Director	
	<b>New Security Door Hardware Supply and Installation</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">IFB - New Security Door Hardware Supply and Installation ADA - REVISED.docx</a> </li> </ul>	
	Approve consent items as presented or amended	#
	Moved by: Emily Syphus; seconded by: Robert Gowans	
	<b>Yea:</b> Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan	

**Motion Carries 6-0**

**7. Action Items**

- 7.1 Capital Improvements, 1st Read #  
Michael Garcia presented proposed Capital Improvements to the Board for a first read.

[Operations Capital Outlay Narrative.docx](#) 

[Capital Outlay 2026-2027 BOE.pdf](#) 

Move Capital Improvements forward for a 2nd Read. #

Moved by: ValaRee Shields; seconded by: Robert Gowans

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

- 7.2 2026-2027 Student Fees, 2nd Read #

Rebecca Leakehe, Accounting Director, presented the proposed 2026–2027 student fees to the Board for a second read. She reported that, following the first review, a cap of \$5,000 was added for the total annual fee waiver available per student. Ms. Leakehe also explained that, due to new legislation, fee waivers must now be limited to two out-of-state trips per student.

[2026-2027 Proposed Fee Schedule.pdf](#) 

**DISCUSSION TO MOTION:** Member Bryan expressed concern about the current student fees for activities, noting that the associated costs can create a hardship for families.

Approve the Proposed 2026-2027 Student Fees as presented. #

Moved by: Elizabeth Smith; seconded by: Robert Gowans

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, and Emily Syphus

**Nay:** Elizabeth Smith and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 4-2**

- 7.3 Revised Policy 5048, Student and Staff Memorials, 1st Read #

Heather Castagno, Director of Student Services, presented proposed revisions to Policy 5048, *Student and Staff Memorials*, for a first reading. The revisions clarified and updated acceptable and prohibited memorial practices to align with evidence-based suicide prevention “do no harm” principles while maintaining a consistent and appropriate educational environment. The updates emphasized the use of restrained, school-endorsed memorials to reduce the risk of prolonged trauma for students and staff and reflected current best practices in prevention and crisis response.

[Revised Policy 5048 - Student and Staff Memorials, 1st Read.pdf](#) 

[Honoring with Care - Do No Harm Memorial Policy graphic.pdf](#) 

[Updates to Policy 5048 Student and Staff Memorials.pdf](#) 

[comparison of changes.docx](#) 

Move revised policy 5048, Student and Staff Memorials forward for a second read. #

Moved by: Scott Bryan; seconded by: Robert Gowans

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

7.4 Revised Policy 5057, Youth Suicide Prevention, 1st Read #

Heather Castagno, Director of Student Services, presented revised Policy 5057, *Youth Suicide Prevention*, to the Board for a first reading. The revisions updated and streamlined the policy to align with the current Utah Code, Board Rule R277-620-3, and the state model policy. Changes included updated terminology and definitions consistent with national standards, removal of redundant language and unnecessary definitions, clarification of statutory and rule-based mandates, and separation of detailed procedures from the policy text through linked guidance. The revisions strengthened clarity, compliance, and alignment with evidence-based suicide prevention practices while maintaining established district protocols.

[5057 Youth Suicide Prevention](#) 

[Policy 5057 Youth Suicide Prevention Policy Request Form.pdf](#) 

Approve revised policy 5057, Youth Suicide Prevention as presented for implementation. #

Moved by: ValaRee Shields; seconded by: Elizabeth Smith

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

7.5 Revised Policy 6020, Notification Received from Juvenile Court, 1st Read #

Bob Curfew, Director of School and Student Safety, presented proposed revisions to Policy 6020, *Notification Received from Juvenile Court*, to the Board. The revisions aligned district policy with recent legislative changes to Utah Code 53G-8-213, granting the District discretion to deny reintegration of students who have been arrested or adjudicated for a forcible felony, regardless of when or where the offense occurred. The updates clarified district authority, outlined areas of Board discretion, and ensured compliance with state law.

[6020 Notification Received from Juvenile Court](#) 

[comparison of changes.docx](#) 

[Policy Request Form Juvenile Court Notification Update.pdf](#) 

Approve revised policy 6020, Notification Received from Juvenile Court as presented for implementation. #

Moved by: Robert Gowans; seconded by: ValaRee Shields

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

7.6 New Policy, District Accountability Hotline, 1st Read #

Chantel Cowan, Director of Policy and Math Curriculum, presented a new policy, "*District Accountability Hotline*," to the Board. The proposed policy represented a comprehensive rewrite designed to align district processes with current State Board of Education rules. The policy expanded reporting access to all individuals, strengthened documentation and investigation requirements, and clarified oversight responsibilities, including procedures for complaints involving the Superintendent. Retirement of the existing policy resolved outdated references and shifted accountability reporting from a finance-specific focus to a districtwide framework that enhanced transparency, compliance, and consistency.

[District Accountability Hotline](#) 

[3040 Board of Education Hotline](#) 

Retire current policy 3040 and approve the new policy District Accountability Hotline as presented for implementation. #

Moved by: ValaRee Shields; seconded by: Robert Gowans

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

7.7 Revised Policy 5004, Student Dress Code, 1st Read #

Heather Castagno, Student Services Director, presented proposed revisions to Policy 5004, *Student Dress Code*, to the Board for a first reading. The revisions were driven by identified district needs and were intended to establish clear, consistent, and respectful expectations for student dress across all schools. The updated policy emphasized unbiased and equitable enforcement practices and prioritized keeping students in class whenever possible.

[5004 Student Dress Code](#) 

[5004 comparison table.docx](#) 

[5004 Student Dress Code Policy Request Form \(1\).pdf](#) 

Move revised policy 5004, Student Dress Code, forward for a second read. #

Moved by: Emily Syphus; seconded by: ValaRee Shields

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

7.8 Revised Policy 11008, Remediation and Make-up Credit for Secondary Students, 2nd Read #

Dr. Cody Reutzel, Assistant Superintendent, presented revised Policy 11008, *Remediation and Make-up Credit for Secondary Students*, to the Board for a second reading. He reported that no changes had been made since the first reading. The revised policy reflects updates to current Utah Code references, clarifies expectations for credit recovery by establishing a minimum performance threshold, restricts advancement in a course sequence until remediation is completed (with limited exceptions for first-year high school students), and streamlines notification and reporting requirements. The revisions are intended to improve clarity, consistency, and alignment with current statute and district practice.

[11008 Remediation and Make-up Credit for Secondary Students](#) 

[Updated Policy Submission Form Remediation \(1\).pdf](#) 

[Policy 11008 comparison.pdf](#) 

Approve Revised Policy 11008, Remediation and Make-up Credit for Secondary Students, as presented for implementation. #


Moved by: ValaRee Shields; seconded by: Robert Gowans

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

7.9 Revised Policy 5031, Personal Technology and Communication Devices, 2nd Read #

Heather Castagno, Director of Student Services, presented revised Policy 5031, *Personal Technology and Communication Devices*, to the Board for a second reading. The revisions updated and clarified expectations for student use of personal electronic devices during school hours, including cell phones, smartwatches, and emerging technologies. Changes addressed evolving technology such as AI-enabled devices, reinforced restrictions during instructional time, clarified exceptions for safety, medical, and accommodation needs, and strengthened provisions related to privacy, misuse, and disciplinary consequences. The revisions were intended to improve consistency, safety, and alignment with current law and district practice.

[Revised Policy 5031, Personal Technology and Communication Devices, 2nd Read.pdf](#) 

[Comparison Table of changes.docx](#) 

Approve revised policy 5031, Personal Technology and Communication Devices, as presented for implementation. #

Moved by: ValaRee Shields; seconded by: Robert Gowans

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

7.10 TSSA Framework for the 2026-2027 School Year #

Jill Whiting, Budget Director, presented the TSSA Framework for the 2026-2027 School Year to the Board for approval.

[FY27 TSSA Framework.pdf](#) 

**DISCUSSION TO MOTION:** President Rich stated that she was interested in better understanding the Board’s responsibility in reviewing how schools are utilizing TSSA funds and whether the Board should consider narrowing or clarifying the framework for allowable expenditures. She referenced Dr. Ernst’s dissertation, noting that when TSSA funding was first implemented, the Board encouraged schools to hire additional employees to reduce non-instructional duties for teachers.

Dr. Reutzel explained that TSSA funds were originally designed to provide principals with resources to address school-specific needs and to support local decision-making. Vice President Gowans expressed that he feels the flexibility for principals has been beneficial for schools.

Approve the TSSA Framework for the 2026-2027 School Year as presented. #

Moved by: Robert Gowans; seconded by: ValaRee Shields

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus, and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

## 8. Information, Discussion or Calendar Items

8.1 Superintendent's Report #

Superintendent Dr. Mark Ernst provided an overview of the district’s leadership restructuring and instructional priorities for 2026–2027. He explained that moving from an area-director model to dedicated Elementary and Secondary Directors will ensure principals receive unified expectations, clearer communication, and more consistent support. The report noted that the current model can result in “different interpretations of district initiatives,” while the new structure provides level-specific expertise and reduces principal stress.

Dr. Ernst also outlined key priorities for both levels, including strengthening instructional leadership, improving system alignment, and enhancing data use. He further reviewed the role of the Director of School Improvement, whose purpose is to “lead systemic, sustainable school growth through relationships, systems, data, and a unified vision,” supported by a multi-year implementation timeline.

[Superintendent's Report May 12 2026.pdf](#) 

[PLAIN TEXT VERSION Superintendent's Report May 12, 2026.docx](#) 

## 8.2 Science Curriculum Adoption

Ricky Scott, Curriculum Director, presented the proposed district science instructional materials adoption plan for the 2026–2031 cycle. The presentation described the need for updated instructional materials aligned with current Utah science standards and assessments, with an emphasis on phenomenon-based, student-centered instruction and the active use of science practices. Staff summarized the committee-driven review process, identified instructional gaps, and reviewed district science performance data. The recommendation included adopting OpenSciEd for grades K–8 and utilizing flexible, phenomenon-based instructional resources for high school science courses, supported by a phased implementation plan. The proposed approach was noted to improve standards alignment, strengthen instructional quality, and achieve long-term cost savings compared to existing curricula.

## 8.3 Behavior Survey Data

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Dr. Sarah Jarnagin, Stansbury Area Director, presented results from a district-wide staff survey focused on student behavior systems. The survey included responses representing all schools and staff roles and identified frequent and significant behavioral challenges across the district. Results indicated that existing behavior systems were perceived by most respondents as only moderately effective or less effective. Key findings highlighted the need for clearer policies and procedures, strengthened Tier 1 prevention practices, expanded Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports, improved staffing and access to behavioral response, more practical professional learning opportunities, and increased parent education. The presentation provided a high-level overview of system strengths, identified gaps, and districtwide needs to support future planning and action.

[Board Pres - Behavior May 2026.pdf](#) 

## 8.4 Board of Education Committee Reports

May Reports:

- Negotiations--Member Thompson was excused from the meeting, so he will report next month.

Move to enter executive session in the executive conference room at 8:49 pm to discuss:

-Collective Bargaining

-Purchase, Exchange, or Release of Real Property

-Character, Professional Competence, or Physical or Mental Health of an Individual  
-Pending or Reasonably Imminent Litigation

Moved by: Elizabeth Smith; seconded by: ValaRee Shields

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus,  
and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**

**9. Executive Session**

9.1 Collective Bargaining

**10. Adjourn (10:00 pm Curfew)**

At 10:00 pm, a motion was made to return to open session and adjourn.

Return to open session and adjourn.

Moved by: Emily Syphus; seconded by: Elizabeth Smith

**Yea:** Melissa Rich, Robert Gowans, ValaRee Shields, Elizabeth Smith, Emily Syphus,  
and Scott Bryan

**Motion Carries 6-0**