

MINUTES OF THE STUDY SESSION- AUGUST 12, 2026

The Board of Education of the Timpanogos School District met in a study session on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 4:00 pm. The study session was held at the Alpine School District Special Education Office in Lindon, Utah.

Board Members Present: President Jennifer Lyman, Vice President Sterling Hilton, Guy Fugal, Grace Rex, David H. Smith, Michele Sorensen, and Ada Wilson,

Also present: Superintendent Jensen & Business Administrator Sundberg and members of the administrative staff. There were approximately 22 others in attendance.

Board President Jennifer Lyman called the study session to order at **4:00 p.m.**

BOUNDARY STUDY

Dave Mower led the Board through an update and discussion of the district's boundary and school configuration study. He reviewed the process beginning with the district's Vision and Values, followed by development of the Robust School Criteria, stakeholder engagement, development of potential options, and the next phase of identifying schools for formal study. He emphasized that no decisions regarding school closures had been made and that the purpose of the Study Session was to provide direction to staff as recommendations are prepared for the August 26 Board Meeting.

The Board reviewed the Robust School Criteria and discussed the importance of evaluating more than enrollment numbers. Criteria included the ability to provide appropriate student supports and special education services, multiple specialty offerings, collaborative teaching teams, administrative support, effective leadership, positive school culture, safety, operational efficiency, facility condition, location, and proximity to other schools. Members discussed the benefits of both smaller and larger schools and reiterated that the ultimate objective is to provide a robust educational experience for students regardless of school size.

Survey and focus group feedback regarding grade configuration was reviewed. Staff reported strong support for moving ninth grade to high school and somewhat lower, but still substantial, support for moving sixth grade to middle school. The Board discussed the need to continue evaluating both proposals before final decisions are made.

Approach to Schools Studied for Possible Closure

Staff presented three possible approaches for identifying schools for formal study:

1. Provide notice to all district schools, allowing maximum flexibility but providing little additional information to the public.
2. Identify a moderately sized group of schools, including schools that could potentially close as well as schools that could be substantially impacted by consolidation or boundary changes.
3. Identify only a very small number of schools most likely to close, providing greater specificity but significantly limiting flexibility as additional information is gathered.

Board members expressed concern that naming every school would provide little meaningful information after months of study, while identifying only a few schools could create the perception that closure decisions had already been made. Discussion favored the second approach, which would narrow the field while preserving the Board's ability to receive community input and evaluate alternatives before making final decisions.

The Board emphasized the importance of transparency and providing meaningful notice to communities that could be substantially affected, even when a school may not ultimately close. Legal Counsel Hyrum Clarke discussed the legal considerations associated with distinguishing between schools considered for closure and schools affected by a closure and cautioned against creating the appearance that decisions had already been predetermined.

The Board directed staff to use the moderately sized approach and return on August 26 with a well-curated list of schools recommended for formal study. Staff clarified that the schools identified at that meeting would be studied, not predetermined for closure, and that actual boundary maps and consolidation scenarios would be developed later through the study process.

Business Administrator Sundberg reviewed public participation requirements and explained that schools formally studied for closure would receive notice and opportunities for public input. In addition to required hearings and Board meeting comment opportunities, staff recommended school meetings, open houses, and other community engagement opportunities. President Lyman emphasized that the hearings would remain open to public participation and that the Board wanted to hear from affected families, employees, and communities.

Secondary Schools

The Board discussed secondary school configuration and the work of the Secondary Boundary Committee. Committee members reported general support for maintaining the district's four high schools and moving ninth grade into the high schools rather than considering high school closure. Members noted that the four high schools could generally meet the Robust School Criteria under a 9–12 configuration.

Discussion then focused on the district's five junior highs. Members discussed the advantages of moving toward four junior high/middle schools aligned with four high schools, allowing for more consistent feeder patterns. Potential benefits included stronger student cohorts, improved continuity of programs, easier coordination of fine arts and other offerings, and stronger alignment between secondary schools.

Facility age, building design, capacity, location, and geographic accessibility were considered. The committee focused its discussion on **Canyon View Junior High, Orem Junior High, and Oak Canyon Junior High** for further study. **Pleasant Grove Junior High** and **Lakeridge Junior High** were generally not included in that group because of their locations in the northern and southern portions of the district and the importance of avoiding geographic gaps in secondary school access.

Secondary Principal and Administrator Remarks

Secondary principals and administrators in attendance discussed potential benefits and challenges associated with moving sixth grade into a middle school setting and ninth grade into high school.

Jamie Dawson, Principal of Orem Junior High emphasized that the Board was considering decisions that would significantly affect students, employees, and communities and expressed appreciation for the deliberate committee process. He noted that both reconfiguration and consolidation would require difficult conversations but encouraged the Board to remain grounded in the robust school criteria and its commitment to providing students the best educational opportunities possible. He expressed optimism about a K–5 and 6–8 model while acknowledging that any configuration change would require thoughtful implementation.

Junior high principals discussed opportunities to intentionally design a **6–8 middle school model** rather than simply adding sixth graders to the existing junior high structure. Mr. Dawson described possibilities such as sixth-grade teams or pods, shared core teachers, and gradual exposure to the secondary environment.

Kate Ross, Principal of Oak Canyon Junior High discussed how a 6–8 middle school configuration could allow the district to redesign courses so they are more developmentally appropriate and provide clearer progression for students. She noted that under the current 7–9 structure, a seventh-grade student may take a course such as Art I that is also offered to ninth graders for credit, resulting in some students taking essentially the same course more than once. Removing ninth grade could create greater distinction and progression in course offerings specifically designed for seventh- and eighth-grade students. Ms. Ross also described conversations at her school about repurposing existing lab or CTE spaces into a maker space, providing students with more hands-on, creative learning opportunities. She expressed excitement about the possibility of reimagining existing spaces and programs around the developmental and instructional needs of middle school students.

John Hanks, Principal of Pleasant Grove High School, expressed support for maintaining all four high schools and said high school principals were increasingly enthusiastic about the possibility of ninth graders moving to the high school setting. He acknowledged that the change would require preparation and adjustment but said there were numerous educational and cultural opportunities associated with a four-year high school experience. He also strongly supported the concept of **pure feeder patterns**, noting the logistical and cultural advantages of having a junior high aligned directly with a high school, particularly if the district ultimately operated four junior highs and four high schools.

President Lyman asked Mr. Hanks specifically about concerns that ninth graders attending high school could be more likely to fall off track for graduation. Mr. Hanks acknowledged the concern and praised junior highs for the focused attention they currently provide to ninth graders. He explained, however, that high schools could extend their existing systems for identifying struggling tenth graders to ninth-grade students. Counselors and administrators could begin working with students from the start of ninth grade, develop a complete four-year academic plan, identify students who fall behind during the year, and provide consistent support through graduation. He noted that while students might lose some of the concentrated ninth-grade attention currently provided at junior highs, they would gain a **four-year support structure beginning the day they enter high school**.

Mr. Hanks further explained that having high school counselors involved beginning in ninth grade could provide greater flexibility in academic planning. If a student altered a ninth-grade schedule and temporarily appeared off track for a particular graduation requirement, a counselor could immediately account for that change in the student's tenth-grade and subsequent schedules rather than viewing the ninth-grade year in isolation.

Peter Glahn, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Secondary added a cultural perspective, expressing confidence in the district's secondary principals and leadership teams. He emphasized that successful reconfiguration would depend heavily on strong school leadership, trusted faculty teams, and implementation at the school level. He stated that the district was particularly well positioned for such a transition because of the quality of its current secondary leadership. Business Administrator Sundberg connected those comments back to the district's robust

school criteria and emphasized that strong school culture and leadership would remain essential regardless of the configuration ultimately selected.

Elementary Schools

The Board then reviewed the work of the Elementary Boundary Committee. President Lyman explained that the committee began with projected enrollment through 2030 and then considered facility age and condition, location, proximity to neighboring schools, available capacity, and the ability to create sustainable robust schools. Many elementary schools are projected to fall below the desired enrollment range, making boundary adjustments and possible consolidations necessary to achieve the district's long-term goals.

The committee identified a preliminary group of approximately ten elementary schools for further consideration: **Foothill, Orem, Orchard, Rocky Mountain, Northridge, Lindon, Windsor, Aspen, Parkside, and Bonneville Elementary Schools**. Members repeatedly emphasized that inclusion on the preliminary list did not mean a school had been selected for closure. The purpose was to provide staff with a reasonable group from which potential consolidation and boundary scenarios could be developed.

The Board discussed the importance of maximizing recently rebuilt facilities and considering long-term capital investment when evaluating options. Members also discussed the geographic concentration of schools in central portions of the district compared with schools serving more geographically isolated areas.

Consideration was given to students who will transition into Timpanogos School District boundaries from Deerfield and Barrett and the need to preserve sufficient capacity in affected areas.

The Board agreed that DLI and advanced learning programs should not drive the initial closure or consolidation analysis. Instead, the Robust School Criteria, enrollment, facilities, and geography should first establish sustainable schools capable of supporting strong programs. DLI and advanced learning program placement could then be evaluated within that framework. Members also emphasized that schools should not be filled to maximum capacity, allowing principals flexibility for specialty programs, class-size adjustments, and other instructional needs.

Discussion suggested that the elementary study could ultimately result in approximately three to five closures or consolidations, although no target or final decision was established. Staff and principals emphasized the importance of remaining open to divergent perspectives and recognizing that grade reconfiguration, boundary changes, and possible school closures could create significant transitions for students, employees, and families.

Principal and Administrator Remarks

Before continuing with Board discussion, President Lyman invited elementary principals and administrators in attendance to share their perspectives on the process.

Elementary School Principal Jenny Moore described the boundary study as intentional and thoughtful, noting that although enrollment was an appropriate starting point, the discussion had expanded to include facility age, demographics, geography, and other factors affecting the long-term health of schools. The administrator acknowledged the difficulty of considering school closures and consolidations because of the strong emotional connection communities have to their schools, but expressed appreciation that the Board had established criteria first, allowing decisions to be considered more objectively and with the overall student experience in mind.

Elementary Principal Vic Larsen encouraged the Board to continue seeking **divergent perspectives**, particularly as it considers grade configuration. He noted that much of the discussion had focused on the advantages of changing grade configurations and encouraged the Board to remain open to reasonable counterarguments. He emphasized that grade configuration changes would directly affect every school and community and cautioned that students could potentially experience several significant changes simultaneously including a new grade configuration, new boundaries, a different school, or a school closure. While recognizing that students and educators are resilient, he encouraged the Board to be mindful of the cumulative impact of those transitions and to proceed thoughtfully. He also recognized that the changes could create significant opportunities for growth and encouraged continued open-minded discussion throughout the process.

Elementary Principal Julie VanDyke reflected on her experience working in both very large and smaller schools and stated that a school of approximately 500 students can still provide a nurturing and positive environment for students. She expressed appreciation for the Board's openness and encouraged members to continue listening for perspectives or possibilities that may not yet have been considered. She said her focus as a principal was already turning toward how to help faculty members and parents navigate potential changes, recognizing that change is difficult and that schools and the district would need to work together to make transitions as smooth and positive as possible for students.

President Lyman thanked the elementary principals and expressed confidence in their leadership and ability to support students, employees, and families through the process.

Board members reiterated their commitment to an intentional, transparent process that takes care of students, employees, families, and school communities. Members acknowledged the strong emotional connection communities have to their schools and emphasized providing opportunities to celebrate school histories, recognizing the difficulty of transitions, and supporting communities through any changes ultimately approved.

The Board expressed its intent to make decisions to create robust and sustainable schools for the next five to ten years, rather than repeatedly revisiting the same enrollment and facility challenges.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:44 PM.