

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR 9TH-12TH HIGH SCHOOL CONFIGURATION STUDY

SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

The Board of Education of the Timpanogos School District held a public hearing on Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. The hearing was held at the Alpine School District Special Education Office in Lindon, Utah.

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

Remote: Board member Ada Wilson

Also Present: Superintendent Joseph Jensen, Business Administrator Jason Sundberg, members of the administrative staff, and approximately 82 members of the public.

President Lyman declared the public hearing open to receive public comment on the proposed 9th-12th high school configuration study at 6:01 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stephanie Dastrup- Orem

Stephanie Dastrup expressed concern about moving ninth-grade students into the high school setting. She said she believes the current grade configuration better supports students developmentally and socially and questioned whether ninth graders should be placed in the same school environment as seniors. She acknowledged that many districts use a 9–12 model but said she believes the current arrangement works well for local students.

Nora Ballantyre- Orem

Nora Ballantyre, who identified herself as living in the Cherry Hill neighborhood of Orem, expressed support for moving ninth grade to high school. She shared that as a ninth grader she benefited from earlier access to high school opportunities, including AP courses, varsity-level sports, and music programs. She said those opportunities were meaningful in her own educational experience and that she would like similar opportunities available to her children.

McKay Heaton– City Not Stated

McKay Heaton spoke in support of moving ninth grade to high school. Reflecting on his own experience growing up in Alpine School District, he said he felt he had fewer opportunities in ninth grade than peers who attended 9–12 high schools. He said entering high school in tenth grade changed his academic mindset because he was surrounded by students discussing college and had greater access to AP, honors, music, sports, and other high school opportunities. He said moving ninth graders to high school could provide students with earlier access to those experiences and better prepare them to compete for college opportunities.

Nicholas Tydryszeski- Orem/Bonneville

Nicholas Tydryszeski expressed strong support for moving ninth grade to high school. He shared that his ninth-grade daughter was already earning high school credit but did not have access to the same college-preparation culture or opportunities she would receive in a high school setting. He expressed concern that ninth grade can sometimes still be treated as part of junior high even though ninth-grade grades appear on high school transcripts. He encouraged the Board not to avoid a change simply because implementation may be difficult and

said that if the change would ultimately improve student opportunities, the district should be willing to undertake the work necessary to make it successful.

Carrie Christensen- Pleasant Grove

Carrie Christensen spoke in opposition to moving ninth grade to high school. She said she believes students should already be developing study habits, responsibility, and preparation for graduation before ninth grade and emphasized the role of parents in helping students understand the importance of their academic choices. She shared that her children had positive experiences with junior high counselors and academic preparation and said families can seek additional high school opportunities, including athletics, while students remain in junior high. Ms. Christensen also expressed concern about social dynamics between younger ninth-grade students and upperclassmen and said she believes keeping ninth graders in junior high provides an additional year of development before entering the high school environment.

Catherine Monson- Pleasant Grove

Catherine Monson expressed concern about moving ninth grade to high school because of existing school and classroom capacity. As a former teacher, she emphasized the importance of class size in behavior management, remediation, and monitoring student understanding. She questioned how high schools that are already crowded could accommodate an additional grade level without additional facilities and encouraged the Board to carefully consider classroom capacity.

Chad Olson- Lindon

Chad Olson expressed support for moving ninth grade to high school. He noted that ninth-grade courses already count toward high school graduation and said it therefore makes sense for ninth graders to attend high school. He also discussed the difficulty families face when ninth-grade students participate in high school athletics but must travel from a junior high campus to the high school during the school day. He said transportation can create barriers for working parents and can limit students' access to activities and opportunities that would be more readily available if they were already attending high school.

Nathaniel Johnson- City Not Stated

Nathaniel Johnson spoke in support of moving ninth grade to high school. He described his own experience attending Westlake High School when it operated as a 9–12 high school and said beginning high school in ninth grade had a significant positive influence on his education. He said attending high school as a ninth grader helped him take school more seriously, build relationships with teachers and peers, and develop an educational trajectory that eventually led him to college and graduate school. Mr. Johnson acknowledged that implementation would require adequate resources but said that, assuming those resources are available, he supports a 9–12 configuration.

Jessica Turnbow- Pleasant Grove

Jessica Turnbow spoke in opposition to moving ninth grade to high school. She acknowledged benefits and drawbacks to both configurations but said her children had benefited from remaining in junior high for ninth grade. She described ninth grade as a confidence-building year in which students can begin high school-level coursework while still being among younger peers. She said her children had access to AP testing, music, and other strong academic and extracurricular experiences while attending junior high. Ms. Turnbo also reflected on her own experience attending a 9–12 high school and said she remembered feeling intimidated by older students. She expressed concern about the emotional well-being of ninth graders and said she believes the current configuration provides an appropriate developmental transition.

Erin Webb- Orem near the Orem-Lindon border

Erin Webb spoke in opposition to moving ninth grade to high school. She expressed concern about placing 14-year-old ninth graders in the same environment as significantly older high school students and shared a family experience illustrating the social concerns her parents faced when her older sister attended a 9–12 high school. Ms. Webb said her own children had been academically successful while remaining in junior high for ninth grade, including participation in honors and advanced coursework and later earning college credit. She emphasized the role parents can play in seeking out academic opportunities and helping students prepare for college. She acknowledged that transportation to high school activities can be inconvenient for ninth-grade students but said families can often coordinate transportation and carpooling. She reiterated her preference for keeping ninth grade in the junior high setting.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Board President Lyman thanked everyone who provided comments regarding the 9th-12th Grade High School Configuration Study.

Board President Lyman formally closed the public hearing. No action was taken, and the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

BOARD PRESIDENT

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Jen Lyman, President:	AYE ☐ NAY ☐	ABSTAIN ☐	ABSENT ☐
Sterling Hilton, Vice President:	AYE ☐ NAY ☐	ABSTAIN ☐	ABSENT ☐
Guy Fugal:	AYE ☐ NAY ☐	ABSTAIN ☐	ABSENT ☐
Grace Rex:	AYE ☐ NAY ☐	ABSTAIN ☐	ABSENT ☐
David H. Smith:	AYE ☐ NAY ☐	ABSTAIN ☐	ABSENT ☐
Michele Sorensen:	AYE ☐ NAY ☐	ABSTAIN ☐	ABSENT ☐
Ada Wilson:	AYE ☐ NAY ☐	ABSTAIN ☐	ABSENT ☐

The MINUTES: ☐ PASSED ☐ FAILED