MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah
September 28, 2026
4:30 p.m.

Present: Board President David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President LaRene Cox, 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, Communications Director Steven Dunham, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Teaching and Learning Director Brian Stevenson, and Student Services Director Brad Christensen.

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence by Board Member Seegmiller.

Present from Ivins City: Council Member Wayne Pennington and Council Member Dillon Hurt

A. WORK SESSION

1. Meeting with Ivins City

Council Member Wayne Pennington and Council Member Dillon Hurt shared about growth and developments in Ivins City. Wayne Pennington said Ivins City is growing the same as other parts of Washington County. They are working to make it a family community and bring in more families. It was mentioned that many of the families in Ivins home school their children. When looking at affordable housing, they are getting a lot of push back on high density housing. They have been working with SITLA on a high density project that could increase the population on Ivins City by 15-20%. They briefly reported on upcoming developments in the planning stages. They reported on things happening with the Black Desert Resort. They are just finishing Hamlin Parkway connecting to the southern corridor through Ivins, with three residential phases remaining. The underground parking garage near Black Desert has been under construction for over three years and is nearing completion. The upcoming boardwalk with shops and restaurants is expected to boost sales tax revenue for Ivins. A water park is also under construction. The hotel complex is nearly finished and will mostly house visitors, minimizing direct school population impact. The group discussed critical housing shortages impacting the service workforce and public safety employees, threatening long-term community stability. Service industry housing poses major challenges as Black Desert plans for 2,400 hourly workers, with only 60-70 jobs paying over $50,000 annually, mostly low-income service roles. The board stressed urgent need for affordable housing solutions to support this workforce and prevent long commutes from becoming unsustainable. There is limited enrollment growth was across area schools such as Red Mountain and Santa Clara, each with around 350-400 students currently. Red Mountain's enrollment includes a full bus load from outside boundaries. Sunset and Arrowhead schools show enrollment

near 400-500 students, with Sunset serving younger kids from affordable apartment areas. The group also discussed enrollment at the Vista Charter School in Ivins. Craig Hammer encouraged the city to keep the lines of communication open with the District. Craig Seegmiller expressed appreciation for efforts to have affordable housing. Burke Staheli suggested looking at the Veteran source of wealth that could get youth involved in learning about or serving the Veterans. Craig Seegmiller said there is a sense of vibrancy that comes with kids. David Stirland expressed support for Ivins City and hopes that they will do the same for the School District in providing a great education for students.

Board Member Cox presented a motion to go into a closed session at 1:10 p.m. Board Member Wade seconded the motion.
Board Member Seegmiller voted Yes
Board Member Cox voted Yes
Board Member Staheli voted Yea
Board Member Wade voted Yea
Board Member Hammer voted Yes
Board Member Gunn voted Yes
Board Member Stirland voted Yes

Present: Board President David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President LaRene Cox, 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, Communications Director Steven Dunham, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Teaching and Learning Director Brian Stevenson, Student Services Director Brad Christensen, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.

B. CLOSED SESSION
1. Property and Personnel Items
Personnel and legal items

Board Member Wade presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 2:48 p.m. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

C. FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING
1. Five County Association of Governments – Burke Staheli
Burke Staheli briefly discussed the financial challenges faced by the Five County Association, emphasizing the impact on Washington County's share. The association is having difficulty funding services, with an $8.2 million budget and an aging fleet, where the newest vehicle dates back to 2011. The new director has improved communication with weekly updates. The association provides services primarily for poverty and aged populations, indirectly benefiting Washington County. They would like 15% from the school districts. The board stressed that if student benefits from these programs can be demonstrated, the funding is justified. The board membership and voting quorum require representation from all five counties. Some districts expressed reservations, causing the association to delay decisions to refine numbers. Washington County's financial share equals that of the other four counties combined. Superintendent Richard Holmes said the other districts are pushing back. Brent Bills mentioned our money by state law has to go for education.

D. WORK SESSION
1. Board PLC Training – Wade Jensen
Wade Jensen highlighted the critical role of learning coaches in teacher development and student achievement across elementary and secondary schools. He reported significant coaching engagement

with 22,789 coaching sessions last year and an increase of 850 sessions in secondary schools since 2024-2025. Elementary schools have full-time learning coaches; secondary schools have part-time coaches with scheduled periods. Learning coaches work closely with both EYE and veteran teachers to improve teaching strategies. The link between coaching efforts and improved test scores and student proficiency was emphasized. Teacher surveys show they love the coaching happening with 94% of new teachers valuing mentoring and 90% of veteran teachers reporting comfort in seeking help from learning coaches. Coaches receive monthly training sessions, alternating between group meetings and targeted classroom observations. Learning coaches often become principals, highlighting their leadership development role. The training team is led by top educators like James Spark, Robert Profit, and Brooke Porter, with specialized content experts for literacy and math. Elementary learning coaches typically require a reading endorsement beyond their bachelor's degree. Learning coaches receive additional paid days for their role. Executive staff recognize learning coaches as vital to school success and leadership pipeline development.

2. Policy 7040 Out-of-State Travel for Activities and Field Trips – Rusty Taylor
Rusty Taylor reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 7040. Changes clarify approved bordering states, restricted trips to one per year, capped student costs at $1,200. National competition travel exceptions were reaffirmed with clear guidelines.

3. Policy 3630 Student Activities – Rusty Taylor
Rusty Taylor reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 3630. Changes include updating language with sports that UHSAA includes. Coaches must complete all UHSAA training requirements prior to coaching and must complete the WCSD Coaches Code of Conduct. The UHSAA rules are mirrored in the policy related to student grades. A copy of the language from the policy 2920 on providing false information for enrollment was also included. Administration can provide exceptions for unavoidable absences. Section 3.5 addresses student, parent, and spectator access and expectations of conduct during activities. He also referenced the code for home school, charter school students, and online student participation Form 913 will be removed.

4. Policy 3740 Personal Device Use Policy – Nate Esplin
Nate Esplin reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 3740. The policy is aligned with recent state code. It allows parents to request accommodations for brief non-instructional device use for specific needs like medical monitoring. Temporary device use locations include main office or counseling center.
This update ensures compliance with new legal requirements without expanding overall device use.

5. 2028-2029 Calendar – Rusty Taylor and Susan Harrah
Susan Harrah shared the two calendar options for 2028-2029. The Board reviewed the options and discussed amendments. Changes will be made to the proposed options for further review. The Board also suggested getting some feedback from the teachers.

6. Water Update – LaRene Cox
LaRene Cox shared an update on the Hildale water. The Board reviewed ongoing water infrastructure repairs, easement negotiations, and plans for a public meeting on related projects. Recent repairs were promptly completed after a blockage caused no water flow to a pond. Easement negotiations are underway with the Stubbs and Black families for road relocation and right-of-way access, essential for pipeline installation. The city will manage billing and collection for water services linked to the project. Public meeting plans were postponed to November to reduce community tensions and improve communication. The board expressed concern about maintaining good partnerships with affected families. Cost recovery and ownership plans include the District paying upfront for pipeline installation and recouping costs via water hookups and metering. The board emphasized controlling the pipeline to avoid third-party profit from infrastructure investments.

7. Open Enrollment/Out of Boundary Report – Rusty Taylor
Rusty Taylor reported on boundary waiver approved as part of the new policy that was approved. These are for the high schools. Boundary waiver pprovals show selective transfers, with six out of six requests

approved for Dixie High and eight out of eight for Snow Canyon High, but only one of seven was approved for Desert Hills. Four the of eight students transferring to Snow Canyon live in the Snow Canyon boundary. It is not 20 or so from one high school going to another and not all of the transfers have been about sports. The new committee process has curtailed free transfers and improved oversight. False information cases have been identified and addressed with unenrollment and future ineligibility. Brad Christensen reported on transfer requests related to bullying accusations. He is having the students work with their boundary school to resolve the bullying issue first. Craig Hammer asked about tightening up on family move situations as the UHSAA requires that a family show documentation that they have sold the home or rented the home when moving schools.

8. Elementary Enrollment Report – Nate Esplin

Nate Esplin highlighted the enrollment concerns at two elementary schools, Desert Canyons Elementary and Horizon Elementary. With the boundary change last year from Desert Canyons Elementary to Bloomington Elementary and Little Valley Elementary, Desert Canyons lost about 100 students from the 748 students enrolled. Currently Desert Canyons is at 731. They have grown that much. There are about 446 kids in the Desert Canyons side and about 275 in the White Dome side. Nate Espin will plan to come back in the next board meeting with a couple of ideas for possible boundary changes if the Board would like to go that direction. Desert Canyons Elementary only has one empty classroom so we will need to think of some options for next year. The other school with a lot of growth is Horizon Elementary. They are seeing a lot of growth from the Long Valley area. Last year at this time they had 636 students. This year they have 633 students. Even though they are getting a lot of new student from Long Valley, families in the Horizon area are growing up and/or moving to other areas. He suggested that we won't need to do anything at Horizon Elementary yet but we will need to consider changes at Desert Canyons Elementary.

9. Secondary Enrollment Report – Cheri Stevenson

Cheri Stevenson briefly reported on Concurrent Enrollment numbers and reviewed the secondary enrollment numbers. Secondary Schools show minor overall enrollment decline (~1%), with stable or increasing numbers at intermediate levels due to cohort progression. Most of our intermediate schools are seeing some growth. The middle schools will see more stability once as the kids move along. Pine View High's enrollment reflects policy allowing boundary students to remain through graduation. The schools in the field are still growing. Alternative and online schools contribute to shifting enrollment patterns. Millcreek has increased their enrollment as they are taking kids sooner that might be at-risk to help them get caught up for graduation. Utah Online does the same thing and helps students who need something different.

10. Review Board Action Items

The staff briefly reviewed the items for Board Action.

Board Member Cox presented a motion to go into a closed session at 4:27 p.m. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion.
Board Member Seegmiller voted Yes
Board Member Cox voted Yes
Board Member Staheli voted Yes
Board Member Wade voted Yes
Board Member Hammer voted Yes
Board Member Gunn voted Yes
Board Member Stirland voted Yes

Present: Board President David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President LaRene Cox, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Ron Wade, Board Member Craig Hammer, Board Member Heidi Gunn

CLOSED SESSION

Personnel items discussed.

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 4:34 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

E. OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD

1. Board Committee Discussions

No items were discussed.

F. 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.

G. OPEN MEETING – 4:30 p.m.

1. Reverence Board Member Gunn
2. Welcome – Board President Stirland
3. Pledge of Allegiance Board Member Wade
4. Recognition

Superintendent Richard Holmes recognized Maria Gonzalez who was named as the National Teacher of the Year by the American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages. She teaches the 5th grade dual immersion Spanish program at Paradise Canyon Elementary. Maria has taught for 11 years in Washington County School District and previously taught in London and Spain, bringing rich cultural experience. This recognition reinforces the district's strength in language immersion programs and teacher quality.

H. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes
   a. August 10, 2026 Meeting of the Board of Education
   b. August 24, 2026 Special Meeting of the Board of Education
2. Financial Report
3. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items
4. Hurricane High School TSSA Plan Change
5. Hurricane Intermediate School TSSA Plan Change
6. Santa Clara Elementary TSSA Plan Change
7. Majestic Fields Elementary TSSA Plan Change
8. Legacy Elementary TSSA Plan Change
9. Sunset Elementary TSSA Plan Change
10. Hurricane Intermediate School SLT Plan Change

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items 1-10. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

I. WHAT'S RIGHT IN WCSD SCHOOLS

1. Santa Clara Elementary – Principal James Lowe

Principal James Lowe reported on what is right at Santa Clara Elementary. He highlighted Santa Clara Elementary's staff and students for strong academic and community efforts with detailed data on reading proficiency and engagement. Kindergarten through fifth grade teams showed reading proficiency rates

ranging from 77% to 89% with the state goal to reach 80% by third grade. Their Chinese dual immersion program exceeded state and district averages in math and language arts growth scores, demonstrating effective bilingual instruction. Reading support staff facilitated over 896 small group sessions last year. Innovative operational improvements like QR-coded custodian requests increased efficiency in supporting teachers' needs. The office staff makes sure that parents and students have a positive experience when coming into the school. He also recognized the PTA and community safety leaders who are involved and a positive influence in the school. Lastly, he recognized the students at Santa Clara Elementary and acknowledged their willingness to do their part in education.

2. Dixie High School – Principal Warren Brooks
Principal Warren Brooks and the Dixie High Student council showcased student achievements and the vibrant school culture. They sang the Dixie High School song and shared a video showing some of the things that are right with Dixie High. He reported that they have a student who was a national finalists for the Merit Scholarship which is huge. Principal Brooks emphasized diversity as a core strength that enriches learning and community. The Student Council reinforced school spirit through traditions like the school hymn, fostering student leadership, and pride.

J. PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS
No comments were given on Board Action Items.

K. BOARD ACTION ITEMS
1. Policy 1331 Paid Parental and Postpartum Leave – Darin Thomas
Darin Thomas reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 1331. It aligns the policy with HB329, allowing four weeks of paid foster care leave for district employees, and corrects language to match current state code.
Board Member Staheli presented a motion to approve Policy 1331 Paid Parental and Postpartum Leave. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

2. Policy 3740 Personal Device Use Policy – Nate Esplin
Nate Esplin reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 3740. It is being revised to align with state code and allows a parental request for accommodations to use a personal device at school.
Board Member Cox presented a motion to approve Policy 3740 Personal Device Use Policy. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

3. Policy 5110 Architectural Guidelines (Recommendation to Delete) – Rusty Taylor
Rusty Taylor reviewed the proposal to delete Policy 5110. The policy is outdated. Procurement and procedures have changed.
Board Member Hammer presented a motion to delete Policy 5110 Architectural Guidelines. Board Member Wade seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

4. Policy 1930 Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators (SHiNE) Program – Darin Thomas
Darin Thomas reviewed the proposed change to Policy 1930. The policy funding amounts adjusted to reflect decreased payment levels from $4,563 to $3,130 per eligible full-time educator as mandated by legislation. The revision ensures district policy stays current with state funding codes and maintains transparency.
Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve Policy 1930 Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators (SHiNE) Program. Board Member Staheli seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

5. Policy 3400 School Fees/Solicitation of Funds – Brent Bills
Brent Bills reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 3400 with changes to state law. Policy 3400 on school fees is being amended to clarify fee waivers for overnight activity trips and establish a $300,000 annual fee waiver cap.

Board Member Wade presented a motion to approve Policy 3400 School Fees/Solicitation of Funds. Board Member Hammer seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

6. 2026-2027 Fee Schedule Change – Brent Bills
Brent Bills reviewed a proposed change to the 2026-2027 fee schedule that came as part of the state audit. The Fee Schedule for 2026-27 was updated to set a maximum textbook fee of $250 per concurrent enrollment course per state Office of Education recommendation.
Board Member Gunn presented a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Fee Schedule Change. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

L. DISCUSSION ITEMS
1. Policy 7040 Out-of-State Travel for Activities and Field Trips – Rusty Taylor
Rusty Taylor reviewed proposed changes to Policy 7040. The changes provide clarifications on approved out-of-state travel. Out-of-state travel is limited to bordering states and specifies certain locations in Nevada and Arizona that are not considered out-of-state travel. The policy permits CTSO students competing in national competitions to travel to other states. Those trips are done annually and students have to qualify for the travel through state competitions. The policy will have a 30-day review period for comments.

2. Policy 3630 Student Activities – Rusty Taylor
Rusty Taylor reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 3630. It clarifies student activities and extracurricular activities. Updates include the recognition of Cheer under the UHSAA, freshmen participation rules, and coaches' certification standards. Coaches must also complete the WCSD Coaches Code of Conduct prior to coaching. The statements and consequences for false enrollment information and clarifications on attendance waivers for valid reasons is also included in the policy. The policy strengthens administrative authority to manage student and spectator conduct at events.

3. 2028-2029 Calendar – Rusty Taylor and Susan Harrah
Rusty Taylor mentioned some options were presented earlier to the Board and some recommended adjustments will be made to the calendars.

4. 2026-2027 Utah Online SLT and TSSA Plan – Brent Bills
Brent Bills said the state office contacted us and will no longer allow the Online school to do one plan. The elementary plan has already been approved. The plan presented for review is the for the Utah Online High School.

M. INFORMATION ITEMS
1. Literacy Report – Superintendent Richard Holmes
Superintendent Richard Holmes reported on the literacy bill, SB 241, that passed legislation last spring. The data will be reported to the Board three times a year. This first report includes the beginning of year (BOY) Acadience data for grades K-5. It initial literacy assessment was given to all elementary students and tells the percent of students that are proficient. Our District proficiency for 2026 was 78.6%. He also showed the progress made over the past several years. The goal of SB 241 is that every district have a goal of 80% proficiency in grades K-3. Our results are really good. He compared our score with similar districts in the state showing how well we are doing. Our growth number for Washington County School District was 72.2%. We are doing an amazing job. We need to make 80% proficiency, so we are very focused on that. Our Learning Coaches are helping teachers with that specifically in elementary. Superintendent Richard Holmes also shared some of the RISE data which is given at the end of the year. For 2025-2026 our 3rd grade saw a 4% proficiency increase over the previous year and was 5% above the state. Our 4th grade also saw a 4% proficiency increase over the previous year and was 5% above the state with a growth score of 55. Our 5th grade had a 2% proficiency increase and was 2% above the state with a growth score of 52. We always want to be going northeast and we always want to be above the state. Brent Bills said that schools that do not reach 80% will have to use TSSA funds to help with literacy improvement. Superintendent Richard Holmes shared that with SB 241, students not at 80% by

3rd grade would be retained, but we are focusing on students below grade level. We would know that there are indicators early on and would be much more comfortable retaining a kindergartner rather than waiting until 3rd grade.

N. REPORTS

1. Superintendent

No report given.

2. Board

No report given.

3. Association

No report given.

4. PTA/PTO/Community Council

Liesel Clove, Dixie Council President, shared it has been a great start to the year for the schools she interacts with. The PTAs are busy and running. The PTA Reflections are due next month and a lot of the PTAs are still doing membership drives and trying to boost their membership to get people on board with helping the schools for the year. She shared an event Enterprise High is planning for their fall fundraiser. They hold a Zombie Run for families and the community. They start and finish on their high school track. Every participant wears a flag football belt with the flags. As they fun through the course, the zombies come out and try to pull flags. If participants arrive back to the high school track with their flags intact, they receive a special award. They have a nice dinner that is donated by some of the community partners. This is an event that they have done for a few years now. The event is scheduled for October 7th. She thanked the Board for their support of the schools, students, and PTA.

O. PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 minutes each

There were no comments given.

Board Member Hammer presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:37 p.m. Board Member Gunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

P. ADJOURNMENT