MINUTES OF THE STUDY SESSION – October 8, 2026

The Board of Education of the Aspen Peaks School District met in a Study Session on Thursday, October 8, 2026, at 4:02pm. The Study Session took place in the boardroom at the Alpine School District office in American Fork, UT.

Board members present: Vice President Amber Bonner, Nicki Brammer(arrived at 4:05pm), Jeanne-Marie Burrows, Jason Hart, Steve Sparti(arrived at 4:04pm), and Jason Theler. Board President Diane Knight was absent.

Also present: Superintendent Perkins and Business Administrator Bea Twede. There were approximately 9 others in attendance.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Audit Committee video and details
    a. We watched a video about the Audit Committee for Board Members that was produced by the Utah State Board of Education.
        i. SUMMARY of video
            1. Audit Committee Purpose
                a. To provide oversight of the:
                    i. External audits
                    ii. Internal audits
                    iii. Monitoring
                b. Internal control system (including risk management),
                c. Compliance with laws and regulations, and
                d. Other similar activities
            2. Audit Committee Structure
                a. Utah Code §53G-7-402(1) requires every local school board to establish an audit committee.
                    i. For a LEA board of seven, the audit committee includes three members of the LEA board.
                    ii. Committee can also include community members, but should not outnumber the board members on the audit committee.
                        1. Consider individuals with audit, finance, legal or compliance backgrounds
                        2. No conflicts of interest
                    iii. The audit committee cannot include or be led by any members who are employees of the LEA.
                    iv. LEA Board members select audit committee members.
                    v. Audit committee chair selected by committee members, board leadership, or the full board.
                        1. We will use the Finance Committee members as the Audit Committee members.
            3. Audit Committee Relation to LEA Board
                a. Audit Committee
                    i. Make recommendations to the LEA Board regarding selection of auditors
                    ii. Report assessment of auditors' compliance with professional standards
                    iii. Provide information and reports from audit committee meetings
                b. LEA Board
                    i. Select independent external auditor or CPA firm
                    ii. Hire internal auditor

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iii. Approve internal audits based on recommendations from audit committee
iv. Review audit reports

4. Website
    a. Law requires the following to be included on the LEA website:
        i. Names of the audit committee members,
        ii. Name of audit committee chair,
        iii. Name and contact information of internal audit director and
            1. This title is given by statute
        iv. LEA's annual Internal Audit Plan
5. Hotline
    a. LEA Board must provide a hotline INDEPENDENT from administration for stakeholders to report concerns.
        i. Two options (either is acceptable)
            1. LEA manages independent hotline
            2. LEA uses USBE's Public Education Hotline
        ii. Internal audit director should oversee the independent hotline. LEA Administration should not be involved.
6. Meetings
    a. Meeting logistics are determined by policy.
    b. In absence of policy, logistics are determined by LEA Board, Board Leadership, audit committee or audit committee chair.
    c. Committee should meet regularly:
        i. Frequency minimum is two or three times a year
        ii. Quarterly is best practice
    d. Due to protected and confidential items, the committee should not meet as a quorum of the LEA Board and OPMA does not apply.
    e. Committee can meet in segments, LEA admin can attend the final segment when invited.
7. Audit Committee Responsibilities
    a. Oversee assurance services
        i. External audits
            1. Financial Statement Audit
                a. This is done by Squire
            2. Single Audit (Federal Compliance Audit)
            3. State Compliance Audit
        ii. Monitoring
        iii. Internal audits (examples)
            1. Use of school fee revenue
            2. Compliance with school safety requirements
            3. Evaluation of internal controls
            4. Reliability of graduation and assessment data
            5. Travel policies and processes
8. Audit Standards
    a. INDEPENDENCE
    b. OBJECTIVITY
9. Internal Auditor Director
    a. LEA Board needs to hire/contract an "internal audit director" (does not need to be an admin level position).
    b. Two Choices
        i. Appoint or direct hire the internal audit director (may contract with a consultant to assist if needed)

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ii. Contract for internal audit services (can contract with Audit Director of State Board of the Office of the State Auditor)

c. Audit committee advises the LEA Board about hiring an internal audit director or contracted services.
d. If hiring, the individual is appointed/hired similarly to the appointments of Superintendent and Business Administrator.
e. Internal audit CANNOT be supervised by LEA admin.
f. Internal audit must be independent from any non-audit services (accounting, I/S, etc.)
g. Internal audit directly communicates with the audit committee and LEA Board.
h. Auditor must conduct audits in accordance with professional auditing standards.
    i. Red book
    ii. Yellow book
    iii. Auditor can act as staff to audit committee.
i. We do not have a policy in place currently. The Policy Committee will draft a policy.
j. At our Board Meeting in 2 weeks we will have someone attending from the State Office to address us.

2. Finish Board Governance Handbook - continuing with Section 10
    a. Section 10 - Governance Self-Discipline
        i. Practices the most respected boards share. None are required; each is worth committing to.
            1. Read more than you speak
            2. Disagree on substance
            3. Defer to expertise where it lives
            4. Resist the urge to manage
            5. Use closed sessions appropriately
            6. Take training seriously
            7. Welcome public input, even when uncomfortable
            8. Hold the line on board-as-a-body
        ii. When conduct concerns arise - the Board's code of ethics (Policy 1050) is the governing standard, and the formal censure procedure there requires legal counsel review before any step is taken. In practice, most conduct concerns resolve long before that point. The working escalation pattern:
            1. Self-correction
            2. Private conversation
            3. Full Board discussion
            4. Formal action
            5. The goal at every step is resolution, not escalation. The Board's effectiveness depends on members addressing conduct concerns directly and early, rather than letting them fester into public conflict.
    b. Section 11 - Committees and the Board's Oversight Structure
        i. Committee work is where most Board members do their most substantive learning, and the structure is worth understanding early because Aspen Peaks does it differently than a member might expect.
            1. The district's standing committees - the district operates seven standing committees, led by members of the Superintendent's team:
                a. Communications
                b. Finance
                c. Capital Planning
                d. Government Relations

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e. Policy
f. Student and Staff Support
g. Teaching and Learning
h. Each Board member participates in more than one. Because these committees are staff-led, a Board member's role in them is to bring governance perspective, ask questions and carry work back to the full Board. It is not to direct the committee or its staff lead. The single-point-of-contact rule in §6 applies inside committee work exactly as it does outside it.
i. If you are unable to attend a committee meeting, reach out to another board member to attend in your place.
j. Committees recommend; they do not decide. All Board action is reserved to the full Board acting as a body.

2. The Audit Committee is Different - the Board's Audit Committee is not a staff-led committee and cannot be. Utah Code §53G-7-402(1) requires every local school board to establish an audit committee, and Utah Code §53G-7-401 define it: for a board of seven or more members, **three members of that board**, composed of people who are **not administrators or employees of the LEA**.
    a. Practically, that means three things:
        i. The Audit Committee is a **board** committee with three Board members on it, and District staff cannot lead or sit on it.
        ii. It cannot be folded into the staff-led Finance committee. Some districts place audit under a financial committee, but only where that finance committee is itself a board committee.
        iii. The Superintendent and Business Administrator support the committee's work and attend as needed, but the committee's line to the external auditor is its own.
    b. What the committee does. Receives and reviews the external auditor's report and any internal audit findings; oversees internal controls; ensures findings are available to USBE's audit director, the Office of the State Auditor, and the Office of the Legislative Auditor General; and refers to significant matters it cannot address. There is no statutory minimum meeting frequency; two to three times a year is the practical floor, and quarterly is better.
    c. One practice worth adopting from the first audit cycle. Meet with the external auditor in a session management does not attend. This is not legally required. It gives the auditor a direct channel to the Board and produces a record of Board-level financial scrutiny that is independent of management, which is the strongest protection a new district's board can build for itself.
    d. Committee members should take USBE Internal Audit LEA audit-committee training modules before the first audit cycle. They are short, free and specific to this duty.
3. What Board Leadership Owns Directly - Because the District's standing committees are staff-led, several duties that other districts assign to a board policy or governance committee sit with Board leadership (the Board President and Vice President) at Aspen Peaks.
    a. Reviewing the Board's own training needs and recommending annual priorities (§4).
    b. Running the Board's annual self-evaluation under Policy 1210.
    c. Maintaining this handbook and the Board Member Orientation Guide (Appendix C).

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d. Board-side coordination of policy development with the staff-led Policy committee.

ii. Appendix B Open Decisions for the Board - items in this handbook that need a Board decision or confirmation. Several came directly out of board leadership's review; each is written so it can be taken up in a study session and closed.

1. Structure and policy alignment
    a. Audit Committee placement and membership
    b. Committee naming
    c. Board leadership duties
2. Operating norms
    a. Single point of contact
    b. Purchasing threshold
        i. What do we want our threshold to be? $50,000
    c. 72-hour packet standard
    d. Motion sequence - there was conversation about the sequence, Diane and Amber will discuss.
3. Board development
    a. Mentor sourcing
    b. Training hour target
    c. Study-session training segment
    d. Master Board Certification
    e. Retreat cadence
4. Community and calendar
    a. Community advisory committees
    b. Community survey
    c. Student voice
    d. Annual calendar
    e. Time commitment estimate

c. Board Policies that are referenced in the Board Governance Handbook draft:
    i. Pg. 34: Policy 1050 - Board Member Code of Ethics & Conduct
    ii. Pg. 36: Policy 1210 - Board Self-evaluation
    iii. Pg. 36: Policy 1220 - Board Committees

The meeting adjourned at 5:23pm.

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