

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 11, 2025
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

March 11, 2025

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 2:04 p.m. in the Board Room of the Central Administration Building, located at 425 East Ninth Street in Reno, Nevada.

1.02 ROLL CALL

President Beth Smith and Trustees Christine Hull, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, James Phoenix, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley were present. Superintendent Joe Ernst, Student Representative Annie Batavia, and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ila Friedenthal, Nevada Women's Fund, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.04 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

President Smith read the land acknowledgement.

2. Consent Agenda

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Pablo Nava Duran spoke to Consent Agenda Item 2.21. He expressed concern regarding the viability and future planning of the proposed PreK-8 school on the current Edward L. Pine Middle School campus. He cited the data provided by the district that showed projected declines in enrollment of up to 60% over the next 10 years and believed the information raised questions about the feasibility of a PreK-8 or a PreK-5 school. He was also concerned about the potential impact on Earl Wooster High School and if that school would eventually be rebuilt, closed, or consolidated. He urged the Board to consider the implications of declining enrollment, school planning, and school consolidations when making decisions about future school construction and zoning.

It was moved by Trustee Mayberry and seconded by Trustee Phoenix that **the Board of Trustees approves Consent Agenda Items 2.02 through 2.23.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Christine Hull, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, James Phoenix, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

- 2.02 The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the January 7, 2025 Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- 2.03 The Board of Trustees requested the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund Board of Trustees reimburse the district for retiree health benefits from the Washoe County School District OPEB Trust Fund during Fiscal Year 2024-25.
- 2.04 The Board of Trustees approved the increase to the Nevada Registry's existing agreement with Bright Associates to complete the development of the Nevada Registry Workforce Data/Dashboard Report generator tool and the Early Care and Education Workforce Wellness Guidebook in the amount of \$67,000.
- 2.05 The Board of Trustees approved the grant application to the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Fund for a Healthy Nevada Hunger Funds grant for \$239,526.
- 2.06 The Board of Trustees approved the 3-year agreement with Corwin Press in support of professional development for teachers and school site administrators in the total amount of \$314,625.
- 2.07 The Board of Trustees approved Amendment #1 to the Professional Services Agreement with JK Architecture & Engineering to replace attic hatch ladders at 23 elementary school sites in the amount of \$16,940.
- 2.08 The Board of Trustees awarded Bid #25-55-B-01-DA, Repairs and Resurfacing of Track at Reno High School, to The Track Doctor, Inc. in the amount of \$182,923.
- 2.09 The Board of Trustees approved Renewal #2 for Request for Proposal (RFP) #21-003, District-Wide Wide Area Network (WAN), to AT&T for an

additional 1-year term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 in the estimated total amount of \$479,429.40.

- 2.10 The Board of Trustees accepted the Budget Transfer Report and provided authorization to include budget transfers between functions or programs for the General Fund and Special Education Fund for the period January 1, 2025 through January 31, 2025 and approved transfers from the district's General Fund Contingency Account, in the official Board minutes, as required by Nevada Revised Statute 354.598005.
- 2.11 The Board of Trustees approved the award of Request for Bid (RFB) #89-B-01-25-GS, Copier Parts & Supplies, to GCS Imaging, Inc. in the estimated amount of \$156,665.02 and Katun Corporation in the estimated amount of \$55,764.72 for an estimated contract total of \$212,429.74 for an initial term of 2 years beginning March 15, 2025 and ending March 14, 2027 with three (3) optional 1-year renewals.
- 2.12 The Board of Trustees approved Amendment #1 to the Agreement to Provide Professional Consultant Services with Wood Rodgers. Inc. for the George Getto Transportation Modernization Project in the amount of \$57,850.
- 2.13 The Board of Trustees approved the purchase of Transition to School Backpacks for Washoe County School District kindergarten students from Lakeshore Learning Materials using Early Childhood Innovation Literacy Program (ECILP) State Grant Funding for \$174,943.86.
- 2.14 The Board of Trustees acknowledged receipt of revised notification of declared emergency repairs pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes 332.112 and 338.011(2), contract related to emergency, for the cleanup and repair of water intrusion at Galena High School theater for an estimated amount of \$75,000.
- 2.15 The Board of Trustees approved Renewal #3 of Request for Bid (RFB) #054-01-06-21, Certain Standard & Custom Pleated Air Filters, to Air Filters Sales and Service for an estimated amount of \$152,000 for an additional 1-year term beginning March 31, 2025 and ending March 30, 2026.

- 2.16 The Board of Trustees approved the 1-year agreement with PowerComm for security system services that support Washoe County School District video surveillance systems at a cost of \$115,708.
- 2.17 The Board of Trustees approved the Agreement to Provide Professional Consultant Services to Forensic Analytical Consulting Services, Inc. for construction hazardous material oversight for the 2025 Capital Renewal Projects in the amount of \$393,740.
- 2.18 The Board of Trustees approved the award of Request for Proposal (RFP) #87-P-12-25-MS, Required External Audit Services for Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Annual Financial Statements, to Crowe LLP for a 5-year contract term beginning March 12, 2025 and ending March 11, 2030 in the estimated amount of \$651,531.
- 2.19 The Board of Trustees awarded Bid #25-49-B-01-DA, Roof Replacement of Sections B and C at Edward C. Reed High School, to D&D Roofing and Sheet Metal, Inc. in the amount of \$2,991,175.
- 2.20 The Board of Trustees approved the purchase of 12 new school buses through the Joinder Utah State Contract #MA812 from Bryson Sales in the estimated amount of \$2,572,225.
- 2.21 The Board of Trustees approved the Agreement to Provide Professional Consultant Services with Van Woert Bigotti Architects for a PreK-5 concept design, building assessment, and PreK-8 master plan on the Edward L. Pine Middle School Campus for \$1,557,000.
- 2.22 The Board of Trustees approved the appointment to the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission of Mackenzie Winkelmaier, At-Large Member, for a 2-year term ending June 30, 2027.
- 2.23 The Board of Trustees approved the potential agreement with the American School for the Deaf, PACES Treatment Program in the amount of up to \$582,000 for the duration of the 2024-25 School Year and the 2025-26 School Year.

3. Items for Presentation, Discussion, Information and/or Action

3.01 PRESENTATION OF A WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCLAMATION HONORING NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH IN THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. Katie Louise Weir, Director of Professional Growth Systems, provided a brief presentation on the critical role women played in the success of the district. She highlighted that women made up 76% of the district workforce, including 79% of certified staff, 78% of teachers, 64% of principals, and 64% of central office administrators. The following employees were honored for their years of service to public school students:

Colleen Winter, 39 years as a principal, assistant principal, dean, and teacher.

Alice Kaskie, 39 years as a teacher at Lena Juniper Elementary School.

Krissy Brown, 25 years as a principal.

Lisa Guzman, 24 years in the Intervention and Truancy Department.

Lauren Ohlin, 24 years in the Grants Department.

April DeGolyer, 38 years as the Nutrition Manager at Swope Middle School.

Cassie Allred, 18 years in School Police.

President Smith read the proclamation from Superintendent Ernst honoring National Women's History Month for 2025.

3.02 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION, PURSUANT TO BOARD POLICY 9070(1)(B)(i)(2), FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO APPROVE AMENDING BOARD POLICY 9055

President Smith explained she and Trustee Mayberry had requested the item to initiate a formal discussion on potential updates or clarifications to Board Policy 9055. The agenda item did not include a debate on the content of Board Policy 9055, but was rather a procedural item that would allow the Board to initiate a review of the policy.

It was moved by Trustee Woodley and seconded by Trustee Westlake that **the Board of Trustees approves amending Board Policy 9055.**

President Smith opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Nicolet expressed confusion over the proposed motion and if the Board would be voting to amend Board Policy 9055 or initiate discussion.

President Smith clarified that the intent was to approve entering a discussion that may lead to amendments.

Trustee Woodley offered the following friendly amendment to his motion: **the Board of Trustees approves discussing and possibly amending Board Policy 9055.**

Trustee Westlake, as the seconder of the motion, agreed to the friendly amendment.

The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Christine Hull, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, James Phoenix, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

3.03 PRESENTATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO AMEND BOARD POLICY 9055(5)(g) RELATED TO THE LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE AND INITIATION OF THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD

Trustee Mayberry outlined the proposed revisions to Board Policy 9055, related to the duties of the legislative representative in section 5(g). The revisions would establish a process for the Board to take official positions on select pieces of legislation and provide a formal mechanism to provide input to the district's legislative team and superintendent. The changes were not intended to burden Trustees with daily legislative activities or replace staff responsibilities.

President Smith added the revisions would provide clarification and structure to an existing role included in Board Policy 9055. She explained the selection process for the legislative representative would be the same as how other Board officers were selected.

Trustee Nicolet asked if an administrative regulation would be created to provide any additional clarification needed for the role. Neil Rombardo, Chief General Counsel, mentioned that the 9000 series of Board policies did not typically have administrative regulations tied to them because they were the Board's governance policies; however, staff would review the final changes to determine if a regulation was needed.

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Pablo Nava Duran spoke in support of the proposed revisions. He believed the Trustees also needed to speak out against any legislation that would allow for appointed school board members.

Trustee Hull noted the current policy referenced the Nevada Association of School Board (NASB). She wondered why there was a direct tie to the organization and if that needed to continue.

Trustee Nicolet, as the district's representative to the NASB Executive Committee, noted the Board had not selected a legislative representative for a number of years, and it was no longer relevant with the appointment of other representatives to NASB from the

district. While the history of the position could provide some context, it was not pertinent to the current discussion.

It was moved by Trustee Woodley and seconded by Trustee Hull that **the Board of Trustees provides preliminary approval to the proposed revision of Board Policy 9055(5)(g) related to the Legislative Representative and initiates the 13-day public review and comment period.** The result of the vote was

Unanimous: (Yea: Christine Hull, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, James Phoenix, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

3.05 PRESENTATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY 5250 ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES – STUDENT PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION, AND INITIATION OF THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD

Dr. Paul LaMarca, Chief Student Services Officer, and Natalie Sanchez, Chair, Safe and Healthy Schools Commission, provided an overview of the proposed revisions to Board Policy 5250, which focused on student safety and clarified prohibited substances. The revisions included: streamlining the purpose section to emphasize that substances harmed student achievement; new and explicit definitions related to opioids and fentanyl, electronic smoking devices, and vapor products; including clear prohibitions on controlled substances, tobacco and nicotine, and new language to address electronic smoking devices; and the inclusion of a prevention, intervention, and recovery section that allowed the superintendent to develop further regulations. Additional information was presented on the work conducted by the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission on the policy, which also included the development of a comprehensive framework related to prevention and intervention, such as mental health supports, prevention strategies, and bathroom safety.

Trustee Hull suggested the district and Safe and Healthy Schools Commission look at comparing data at schools with modern bathroom layouts versus the traditional bathroom layouts since that could inform facility planning moving forward.

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Pablo Nava Duran spoke in support of the proposed revisions. He also believed the district should advocate at the state level for legislation requiring smoke/vape shops to be located at least a mile from schools. He told the Board about his personal experiences with vape-related disruptions in the schools and the administrative enforcement challenges.

Trustee Mayberry asked if cannabis products were included under the electronic smoking provisions. Dr. LaMarca confirmed that all vaping substances, including THC, were prohibited under the proposed revisions.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Phoenix that **the Board of Trustees provides preliminary approval to the proposed revisions of Board Policy 5250, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Controlled Substances – Student Prevention and Intervention, and initiates the 13-day public review and comment period.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Christine Hull, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, James Phoenix, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

3.04 MILESTONES AND MOMENTUM PRESENTATION TO PROVIDE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AN OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE ON STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 2, STUDENT VOICE AND ADVOCACY

Dr. Paul LaMarca, Chief Student Services Officer, began the presentation by introducing the spotlight school for the Goal 2 Milestones and Momentum presentation, Earl Wooster High School. David Kitchin, Principal, Earl Wooster High School, provided information on Earl Wooster High School's longstanding commitment to student voice and creating a culture of inclusivity. He highlighted the school's student advisory counsel led project to address traffic concerns and student-organized conferences. Nicole Ramirez, Student, Earl Wooster High School, and Amabel Lewis, Student, Earl Wooster High School, shared their experiences helping with the various student-led initiatives occurring at Earl Wooster High School. They emphasized the importance of relationships between students and staff, multilingual access to resources, and events that promoted inclusion and connection. They praised the school's support of the district's portrait of a learner and academic excellence for students.

Lindsay Kendrick, Director of Behavior and Student Support, and Trish Shaffer, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Social-Emotional Learning, provided a presentation on the district's efforts surrounding student voice and advocacy. Information was presented on the recent Student Voice Conference, George L. Dilworth Middle School students' successful advocacy to revise their school's uniform policy and address tardiness, and the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council efforts on promoting respect and positive culture within the schools. The district was now capturing more student feedback on Strategic Plan initiatives as part of the annual climate survey, which showed 68% of students felt they could share their ideas and 60% believed those ideas led to change. Additional data on the expansion of extra- and co-curricular opportunities, such as the launch of 6th grade athletics and the expansion of school clubs, was included in the presentation. Staff was able to track a student's involvement in these opportunities through Infinite Campus, allowing them to identify students not engaged in activities and take steps to increase their sense of connection and belonging.

President Smith recessed the meeting for 20 minutes.

3.06 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE HISTORY, CURRENT WORKLOAD, SCOPE AND SCHEDULE OF THE ZONING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POSSIBLE ACTION, PURSUANT TO BOARD POLICY 9070(1)(b)(i)(2), TO REQUEST THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT RETURN TO THE BOARD WITH AN AMENDMENT TO BOARD POLICY 7105 REQUIRING THAT THE ZONING ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONSIDER ANY REVISION TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ZONES 2 YEARS PRIOR TO THE PROPOSED REVISION BECOMING EFFECTIVE

Trustee Hull explained she and Trustee Mayberry had requested the agenda item because they wanted to ensure transparency, community involvement, and a sense of belonging during the school consolidation process that would occur due to the Facility Modernization Plan (FMP). She spoke of her experience on the Zoning Advisory Committee (ZAC) knowing how early community participation, to include naming, mascots, and identity building, significantly impacted the family and student connection to new schools. She emphasized the need for public engagement well before zoning changes became effective.

Adam Searcy, Chief Operations Officer, provided a comprehensive overview of ZAC's role and operations, including details of how the committee was established following the passage of WC-1 and membership. ZAC was one of the only Washoe County School District public bodies to regularly conduct their public meetings in the school communities that would be impacted by their decisions to maximize public participation. Proposals for zoning changes would typically go through multiple rounds of discussions before any recommendations were finalized and sent to the Board of Trustees for final approval. ZAC and district had worked hard over the past 8 years to remove most split-feeder schools through intentional zoning and boundary realignments. The process used to determine enrollment projections was explained, including the use of birth records to determine kindergarten projections and the collaboration with other local agencies and developers to calculate student generations rates from new housing developments. The current and anticipated workload for the committee was presented. The intent was to have a final recommendation approved by the Board at least a full school year in advance, such as the recommendations for E. Otis Vaughn Middle School approved during the current school year in anticipation of the rebuild opening for the 2026-27 School Year.

Trustee Nicolet inquired about the impacts of rising housing costs and demographic shifts in family demographics on the enrollment projection process. Mr. Searcy explained that the district closely monitored local enrollment generation data from multifamily and single-family residences. The district updated their models annually to reflect changes in student-per-household ratios.

President Smith opened the discussion by outlining the options before the Board: either make no changes to the current policy or consider directing Superintendent Ernst to bring

back draft revisions for consideration. She spoke of her prior experience on ZAC and that most projects during her tenure had focused on alleviating overcrowding. In that context, the current policy had served the district well; however, the was district entering a new phase with the FMP, one that included possible school closures and consolidations, which fundamentally altered the needs and expectations of the community.

Trustee Hull agreed and added that for schools in established neighborhoods, such as those surrounding Edward L. Pine Middle School, consolidation without early and deliberate communication with those communities that might be impacted could result in affected families feeling like an “add-on” rather than an integral part of the new school community. She was concerned that families from schools slated for closure might not feel empowered to participate in any of the processes if not properly engaged from the outset.

President Smith invited the chair of the ZAC to provide his thoughts on any possible revisions to Board Policy 7105.

Tyler Rogers, Chair, Zoning Advisory Committee, delivered an in-depth report outlining the current work, recent lessons learned, and challenges faced by ZAC over the past couple of years. The committee served as a bridge between the district and the public, often working proactively by meeting community members where they were, rather than expecting them to attend formal meetings. Discussions by the committee had shifted from addressing overcrowding to managing school closures and consolidations, requiring deeper analysis of facility utilization, transportation, historical attendance zones, and programmatic impacts. He cited what occurred recently with the zoning for E. Otis Vaughn Middle School, where the community raised concerns that the building designs decisions were made before the student population was finalized. He believed this example highlighted the need for improved transparency and earlier communication with the community regarding design choices and aligning zoning decisions more closely with the School of Choice window to better serve families when considering enrollment choices. It was important for the zoning process to be flexible, especially in scenarios involving closures and consolidations.

President Smith noted she supported the 1-year timeline for zoning recommendations for schools facing overcrowding situations but was interested in seeing additional time for communities facing school closures and consolidations. She, and other Trustees, wondered how school capacities were determined when the future student populations were not yet defined. Mr. Searcy mentioned schools were designed using standardized capacity models, with the current models being 700 students for elementary schools, 1,200 students for middle schools, and 2,000 students for high schools. Flexibility was built into the designs based on enrollment projections and community growth data. The district used the same process when considering construction of a new school or the rebuilding of an existing school.

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Pablo Nava Duran remarked that he was a resident of the Neil Road area, and he was concerned about the rezoning of students to both E. Otis Vaughn Middle School and Earl Wooster High School due to the perceived negative school cultures and declining enrollments. He questioned the long-term viability of investing in new facilities that were expected to see declining enrollment over the next decade. He was also concerned that some of the proposed rezoning maps would cause other school enrollments to decline and threaten their ability to provide numerous elective course options for their students.

Trustee Mayberry inquired if the current challenges surrounding E. Otis Vaughn Middle School were an anomaly due to the older, more established neighborhoods. He was concerned about unintended consequences of making changes to policy if this was a one-time thing.

President Smith stated the FMP included numerous school consolidations and modernizations so the issue was one the Board would be faced with moving forward. She added that she was already hearing from families about the possible attendance zones for the new elementary school to be constructed on the current Edward L. Pine Middle School campus.

Trustee Nicolet remarked that the increased interest in the zoning process was evidence that the district had been open and transparent about future facility plans. She was also concerned about unintended consequences of changes to policy and would rather the Board allow staff to remain flexible and increase the community outreach and engagement to communities that could be impacted by school consolidations.

Trustee Westlake expressed support for early planning and community involvement. She suggested the district initiate the community engagement and planning at least 2 years in advance, then the formal review and decision-making on attendance zones could occur at the 1-year mark.

Trustee Hull reiterated that families were looking for stability and it was important for them to have a sense of belonging and connectedness to the schools by taking part in the decision-making process.

Superintendent Ernst thanked the Board for the rich dialogue and staff for the historical information. He stressed that it would be important to strike a balance between a 1-year and 2-year transition timeline. He understood the reasons some Trustees and community members were interested in the 2-year timeline but cautioned that experience had led staff to recommend the 1-year timeline because of the potential negative effects of earlier

announcements, such as staff departures that could compromise a school's final year of operations.

President Smith countered that families were already aware of the proposed changes because the FMP provided a roadmap. Both families and staff were interested in knowing what would happen sooner in terms of attendance zone changes and school placements.

Trustees Westlake and Hull provided suggestions for staff to consider, such as reframing zoning discussions around different phases of construction, such as the design phase or initial construction phase, rather than fixed timelines. They also believed it was important to engage staff earlier and include them in the community engagement efforts offered to students and families, including naming, mascots, and the like. Superintendent Ernst highlighted that the nature of school consolidations necessitated some flexibility since forecasting models tended to be less accurate the further out a projection was made.

Trustees Nicolet and Phoenix mentioned they were inclined to leave the policy as it was because it already provided flexibility for staff. And they believed staff was already doing the best they could with the information available.

It was moved by Trustee Hull and seconded by Trustee Westlake that **the Board of Trustees approves discussing and possibly amending Board Policy 7105**. The result of the vote was 4-3: (Yea: Christine Hull, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley. Nay: Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, and James Phoenix.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

4. Reports

4.01 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student Representative Annie Batavia reported on activities related to the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council.

4.02 BOARD REPORTS

Members of the Board of Trustees reported on their activities, meetings, and events.

4.03 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Joe Ernst reported on his activities including meetings with staff, community leaders, and the media.

5. Closing Items

5.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

5.02 NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The next Regular Meeting would take place on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

5.03 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Elizabeth Smith, President

Alex Woodley, Clerk