

MINUTES
SPECIAL SUMMER WORK MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
Career Tech High School
1001 East White Dome Drive, St. George, Utah

July 8, 2024

12:00 p.m.

Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Technology Director Jeremy Cox. Board Member Burke Staheli was excused.

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence by Member Cox.

Board Member Simmons presented a motion to go into a closed session at 12:16 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Property and Personnel Items

Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, and Board Member Nannette Simmons

Personnel Items

Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Technology Director Jeremy Cox, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.

Property and Personnel Items

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 2:12 p.m. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Board Member Simmons presented a motion to go into a closed session at 2:13 p.m. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive HR Director Darin Thomas, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Technology Director Jeremy Cox, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.

Property Items

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 2:17 p.m. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Jared Rees said the “Fight the New Drug” group would like to present assemblies in the schools on understanding the impact of pornography. In the evening, they would like to hold a parent meetings at the school. They would plan to present four days of assemblies in the schools. Rusty Taylor and Wade Jensen said they have presented in our schools previously. Jared Rees said they are always updating the information and have included AI in the presentation. Rusty Taylor said the presentations in the past were good. LaRene Cox asked about how they advertise to parents. The District would need to promote it to parents, and it would be promoted in the community. The parent meetings would be held first. The travel and cost would be covered by sponsors and the assemblies would be free to schools. Superintendent Richard Holmes suggested he work with District administration on scheduling and promoting the event.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

No public comments were given.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Policy 1330 Employee Leave – Darin Thomas

Darin Thomas reviewed the policy changes in Policy 1330 for classified employees. He will meet with WCEA on certified policy changes for the following year. The District would start for the 2024-25 school year and would remove the two-year waiting period.

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to approve Policy 1330 Employee Leave. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

GMP for Snow Canyon Middle School and SCHS Tennis Courts – Bryan Dyer

Brent Bills reviewed the guaranteed maximum pricing from Hughes Contractors that was shared last month. The GMP pricing is \$65,319,261.00. It does fit into our master plan and actually came in for less than budgeted. Brent Bills reviewed some contingencies also included.

Board Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the GMP for Snow Canyon Middle School and the Snow Canyon High School Tennis Courts. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Asphalt Seal Coat Award – Bryan Dyer

Brent Bills reviewed the bid amount of \$461,000.00 from Holbrook Asphalt. The Snow Canyon High slurry seal is \$87,000 of that bid. The total contract is \$374,748.00.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the selection of Holbrook Asphalt for the Asphalt Seal Coat Award. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Early Learning Grant Approval – Kathy Hall

Monica Smith reviewed the Early Learning plan for approval. For 2024-2025 the literacy funding was moved into the WPU and no longer requires literacy goals. She said the District will continue with the state math goals. The Early Learning plan is reported to the state on the Tier 1 and Tier 2 curriculum. For 2024-2025 two math goals were set with the literacy program change. Teachers will have a new literacy curriculum and Acadience platform. She shared the process for the Early Learning Plan submission. The state has approved the District plan so now the Board approval is needed. Monica Smith reported on the math goals for 2023-2024. The state has a math growth goal that 60% of the 1st through 3rd grade students will make typical or better growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Our District goal was for 75% of the students to make typical or above growth. All grade levels K-5 met or exceeded the state and District goal. The goals for 2023-2024 focused on proficiency with 2nd grade students increasing by 16% and 3rd grade students increasing by 19%. The District saw an increase of 22% in 2nd grade and 23% in 3rd grade. For 2024-2025 the goals will continue to be 75% of students making typical or above typical growth. For 1st grade students the increase will be 21% from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. For 2nd grade students the increase will be 19% growth. Monica Smith briefly shared how teachers are trained. She said the District is creating math thinkers.

Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve the District Early Learning Grant. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Post High Schedule Change – Hollee Cullen

Cheri Stevenson said Hollee Cullen reached out to families and found that eight families would be severely impacted by the change. She felt it would be best to keep the five-day week program for equity. She will not change the schedule.

Comprehensive Guidance Plan Approval – Jon Butler

Jon Butler reviewed the Comprehensive Guidance program. He shared the counselor to student ratio for our schools. The Utah model is a little higher at 1 to 375 in middle school. The high school counselors work with students one-on-one. He shared data project information and asked for approval for the 2023-24 and 2024-25. Brent Bills said some schools do pay for additional counselors with other funds such as TSSA.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Comprehensive Guidance Plan. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Policy 9201 Guidelines for Accelerated College Level Program – Jon Butler

Jon Butler shared the proposed changes to Policy 9201. He has received feedback and made some adjustments for English, Mathematics, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences. He shared the Utah Tech University requirements and the credits that will transfer to any university in Utah. He mentioned that students can still take the AP course and pass the exam to receive credit. The difference is the rigor and high school graduation credit. The combination will work well to meet the teacher concerns, counselor concerns, and online student concerns. Jon Butler said the policy change would go into effect in the 2025-26 school year to allow time for students to plan. Becky Dunn asked about prerequisites under 4.1. Jon Butler said it does depend on the university. We are letting the college take ownership for the requirements. Universities are required to waive the tuition for Concurrent Enrollment courses.

He is hoping the change may help to keep students enrolled while they are earning extra credits. He would like younger students to have time in school to take advantage of these opportunities.

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to approve Policy 9201 Guidelines for Accelerated College Level Program. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Distributed Antenna System (DAS) Design & Install Bid – Jeremy Cox

Jeremy Cox shared the Distributed Antenna System Design and Installation bid for Hurricane High. Five bids were received. The recommendation was to select Hunt Electric at \$99,995.00. One bid was lower in price, but information was received that it was an estimate. They were given time to submit a hard number but did not resubmit their bid.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve Hunt Electric for the Distributed Antenna System (DAS) Design and Install Bid. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Elevator Maintenance Bid – Brent Bills

Brent Bills reviewed the elevator maintenance bid. There was only one response from TK Elevator. He said that the bid came in about where we expected it to be at \$89,303.50.

Board Member Cox presented a motion to approve the Elevator Maintenance Bid. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Crimson Cliffs High School TSSA Plan Change – Brent Bills

Snow Canyon High School TSSA Plan Change – Brent Bills

Brent Bills briefly reviewed the plan changes for Crimson Cliffs High School and Snow Canyon High School.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Crimson Cliffs High School TSSA Plan Change and the Snow Canyon High School TSSA Plan Change. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

LEA Specific Licenses – Darin Thomas

Darin Thomas reviewed the four LEA specific licenses.

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to approve the LEA Specific Licenses. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policy 2920 Student Enrollment – Wade Jensen

Wade Jensen reviewed the proposed policy changes. He said the proposed changes are broken down into three simple things. The reference to boundary variance will be changed to boundary waiver as it is currently referred to. The second change would remove the \$5.00 fee to apply for a boundary waiver. Third, the changes are to clear up some of the terminology in the policy.

Wade Jensen also shared the boundary waiver application changes. Parents and students must initial what they are agreeing to for the change. David Stirland asked about including reasons in the policy. Wade Jensen said the new changes to UHSAA will hopefully simplify changes for athletics. Cheri Stevenson also mentioned that it allows principals to discuss with parents the best options. Terry Hutchinson suggested that the student should not be initialing for transportation. That is the parent's

responsibility. Becky Dunn asked about the “point of entry” under 3.1.6.3.4. allowing students into the cone site. Wade Jensen said they are guaranteed to stay in that cone site. However, it does not guarantee a “point of entry” into the secondary cone site if transferring elementary schools.

Policy 9100 Adult Education and High School Completion – Cheri Stevenson

Cheri Stevenson said the state review of the program shared feedback on things in policy that need to be changed to be in compliance. The changes represent the information received from the state review.

WORK SESSION

Positive Behavior Plan – Jon Butler

Jon Butler reported on the Positive Behavior Prevention Plan. The plan helps promote positive behaviors to address substance abuse. The plan gives a \$1000 stipend to the Positive Behaviors Specialists. Two individuals in the school complete training. He is hoping to have schools switch the person each year to get many teachers trained.

Policy 2200 Student Dress Code – Cheri Stevenson and Nate Esplin

Cheri Stevenson shared some feedback and a quote from an administrator for consideration. “When it comes to dress code, priority should always be given to clothing that suggests or promotes or advertises gangs, drugs, alcohol, or pornography, basically creating a safe learning environment. These areas are uncompromising when we talk about dress code in the school. The second thing that was provided was feedback from middle school on hats. They are the rule followers, and it is the only thing in policy that we do not allow. Enforcement and consistency were also given as feedback. She said that enforcement will be different for each of the grade levels. Schools are trying not to make this a modesty issue. They are trying not to talk to one gender over another or make it a body image thing. She shared an email from Lyle Cox from July 2022. Cheri Stevenson mentioned an example of a principal discussing with students and parents what it means to be a warrior and how to dress for school. Terry Hutchinson said we need more consistency in revealing clothing from school-to-school. He does not feel it is consistent. Superintendent Richard Holmes said it is a difficult and sensitive subject for administrators. How it is construed now days can be terrifying to them. Brian Stevenson shared how he looked at it at Crimson Cliffs Middle. He said if he saw a student walk by that was a disruption, he would address it. He said that is how many of the schools do it. Dave Stirland said there is some variation in perception. He feels that we need to allow the schools the ability to determine for their school. What works at one school may not work for another. Cheri Stevenson said the policy was written to avoid distractions to the educational environment. Terry Hutchinson discussed how following policy is part of accreditation. Cheri Stevenson said she has not found any research that supports dress code affecting learning. Craig Seegmiller said we can’t have principals being afraid to enforce the dress code policy. He asked the staff to please let our people know that the Board has their back and will defend and support them in doing this. Superintendent Richard Holmes said it has been a game changer for the principals when the staff relays that information that the Board is committed to supporting them with that difficult situation. Cheri Stevenson said it is talked about at the beginning of every school year. She said suggested having principals email a reminder to parents on things to remember. She suggested talking about what we can do to create a better culture. Terry Hutchinson also feels there is no ramification for multiple offenders. Cheri Stevenson said the schools do give consequences for insubordination. Brent Bills said we used to have a very prescriptive dress code. It was determined it would not hold up in court. If it is causing problems and is disruptive, it will hold up in court. LaRene Cox asked about extreme piercing and how it is handled. Terry Hutchinson said we would not be able to defend that in court. The Board discussed style changes and trends. It was suggested to use revealing instead of immodest.

Electronic Devices in Schools – Superintendent Richard Holmes

Superintendent Richard Holmes shared a proposed bill for electronic devices. He feels it will pass. It is written very strict. It allows schools or districts to impose policies that are strict or less strict with the use of electronic devices in school. Terry Hutchinson said there are districts throughout the country are banning cell phones. The use of cell phones is distracting and interfering so much with what is happening in classrooms. Superintendent Richard Holmes said there is data supporting that having no cell phones helps. He mentioned that Granite School District has chosen to still allow schools to make that decision. Not all of their high schools have done it. He said there is some one-time funding of \$4.8 million that schools and districts can apply for to purchase pouches for students to keep their phones in. Students keep the pouch with them for the whole day and the last teacher of the day would unlock the pouch for them. Brent Bills mentioned Canyons School District has some of their schools banning cell phones, but they have not touched the elementary schools. They are banning them more in their secondary schools.

Superintendent Richard Holmes said there is a vocal group that feels parents have a right for their student to have a phone in school. He mentioned that some teachers are frustrated with the phones in classroom while others are more comfortable with it. Cheri Stevenson said a lot of compelling research on the subject related to the mental health of students. Darin Thomas said there are things that teachers are trying to do to eliminate phones in the classroom. Wade Jensen said students know what classes teachers allow students to have phones. Students rise to the expectation of teachers. Darin Thomas said you would have to have buy in from the teachers and the parents to eliminate cell phones. Superintendent Richard Holmes mentioned that some of the schools are even eliminating the use of phones during lunch time. Rusty Taylor said the biggest problems are the social part of phones. David Stirland said it will be an easier sale if we have data to support learning environment without phones in the classroom. Brent Bills said the legislation will not force schools to do it but outlines that districts won't have legal trouble by enforcing it. It is expected that we will have parents who are upset if we don't allow phones in the classroom. Having data to share will help.

Department Goals and Updates – Executive Administration

Nate Esplin and Steve Gregoire shared goals for the Elementary Education Department. Nate Esplin shared some celebrations including the Rise scores and the Acadience scores. We are doing well and improving every year. The 5th grade math scores increased significantly from last year, and we are now ahead of the state. He gave credit to Monica Smith and the training she has done and to the teachers for implementing that training. He said this next year the big focus will be on Language Arts. The District is implementing the new *Into Reading* Language Arts program. He mentioned the excitement for what has been observed with the program. There is a lot of good student engagement with the program and a lot of excellent resources. That will be the main focus for this next year in the elementary schools. Teachers have received a half-day of training so far and will have another full day of training on August 5th. The grade level specialists have been putting together lessons and resources for the teachers so they should be well prepared. He is excited to see what it will do for us. He said the format of the program is a little different than what we have done in the past and follows the Science of Reading. He said along with the new program the Elementary Department will focus on state standards and will do a lot of training with teachers and administrators on the state standards to make sure that is what we are teaching. Steve Gregoire said they tried something a little different this year and brought all of the school administrators and learning coaches together and gathered all the data from Acadience and Rise, and then had all of our teams go through the data before leaving for the summer to look for celebrations and areas where we are doing well and then to pick an area to focus on so they could start over the summer instead of waiting until August. They pulled three-years of data to look at the trends as well. The school came through and filled out benchmarks for what they are going to do with their teams. Most of the schools have already met with their teams over the summer and are working on meeting those goals or working on the training that they need. He said that the principals and learning coaches were also provided a menu of support for the team. Steve Gregoire reported on the school visits by the elementary team and shared what the school visits will review. They are going to be following up with school administrators and their leadership team to see what they are doing, how things are progressing, and what support they still need. He shared some different activities and things that they will be doing with the schools each month to keep the scores going northeast like they went this year. It was tremendous to see the growth. He shared that last year they were able to hold 24 learning walks in the schools. Monica Smith was able to talk with teachers and administrators and told them what we were looking for and then they went out to look for those things each month. It coincided with our principal's challenge for them to get into a certain number of classrooms each month for observations with a checklist for evidence. Principals who completed the challenge were given a coin. There were also coins for specific benchmarks. They value the coins and that was neat to see. There were two school that earned all of the coins. Nate Esplin said they love their jobs and feel so privileged and blessed to be able to work for the School District and to go out every single day and see all the good things that are happening in our schools.

Cheri Stevenson, Wade Jensen, and Rusty Taylor shared the secondary goals. Cheri Stevenson shared an activity done at Principal Academy. She said the vision of the Secondary Education Department is that work for the principals because they work for kids. The principals are their students, and it is their job to make sure they are highly successful just as the principals have a job to make sure the students are highly successful. They are doing that by keeping a focus on what is most important. Research shows that by doing a few things right, it will improve student achievement. This year they will guarantee the principals the following:

This year they will articulate what is important, protect what is most important to build trust, and promote what is most important. They will do that this year by building relationships with the principals, have accountability and trust, and simplify and execute. There are a few strategies that if done well will make a huge difference on student learning. She shared all of the schools that reached the goals for last year. She said that Washington County has the highest growth district rate in the state, but 65% is the

growth number required for students to be on grade level. She shared the goal for this year will be 65% for MGP, having students grow 3%. They will focus on clarity and engagement to get the results we need. Wade Jensen said he is going to focus on the assistant principals to help train and prepare them to be future principals. He will focus training on data meetings, instructional focus, student discipline, and policy and guidelines. He will do onsite visits to help them become better. He wants to push accountability and trust. He will work to build the pool with future administrators through training, giving them administrative experience, and building leadership skills. Rusty Taylor said he will work to help high schools by building relationships, high quality service, on-going and relevant training, and transparency. He is planning to train support younger principals, provide support for all staff such as secretaries, best practices in finance, community work, personnel, policies, etc., develop athletic departments to support the school, and building relationships. Cheri Stevenson said they want principals to understand the work so they can be impactful. Expressing gratitude is one of the focuses for this year even if the principal doesn't get the results they hoped for. They are writing notes each week.

Brad Christensen shared that there are a lot of responsibilities in Student Services. He shared that his goal has always been to take care of the things so the administration can deal with teaching and learning. That is what they have tried to do in Student Services. They want to make sure they are studying out the policies and procedure, the administrative letters, the state codes and legislation and understand them, and that we are writing clear and concise policy that takes care of our kids. They are doing training for administrators and teachers to guide and offer support. He shared areas they are over including: Safe Schools – Reintegration Plans, Threat Assessments, Guardian Program, and Safety Specialists; Behavior – TDTs and appeals, Title IX, Non-Discrimination and Harassment, Student Support Center, and Behavior Techs; Mental Health – MHAP, Wellness/Skills Rooms, and Return to Learn; Homeless Students – Responsiveness and Teen Centers; Enrollment – Custody issues and Retention/Acceleration; Health – Nurses, Health Aides, and Immunizations. He has a lot of the roles the assistant principals deal with at the District level.

Brian Stevenson expressed gratitude to the Board for this opportunity, the executive staff he has been working with, and the staff at the Professional Learning Center that he has been working with. He is impressed with how hard working, smart, and talented they are and is looking forward to being a contributing member of that team. Brian Stevenson said he has thought about what He wanted to do with this position and thought about what he did in his school position that could translate to his new position. He really believes strongly in the effective school characteristics. The research looked at thousands of different schools and identified seven characteristics that they find in all effective schools that have improved student achievement. He shared two of the seven characteristics and how they relate to his new role. In effective schools the staff accepts responsibility for student learning and the essential curricular goals, and they have relentless determination to ensure that students are successful. The goal of the Professional Learning Center is to be a member of every school's staff and will accept responsibility for student learning. They will be relentlessly determined to help principal, teams, teachers, and new teachers be successful because that will translate into success for students. They will celebrate teams when they do really well and will give them all the credit. When they fall short, we will come in accepting responsibility as a solid member of that team to provide the support they need in order to help students be successful. They will flood schools with support and help in order for them to be successful. Second is frequent monitoring of student progress. In effective schools, student academic progress is measured frequently using a variety of assessment procedures. Results are used to improve both individual student performance and instruction. They are going to use data all throughout the year in order to improve as teachers and improve student learning. He mentioned the opportunity to present at the Principal Academy and share some of the data about the current reality that schools were facing. They did a little bit of team data review and provided data for them to look at in multiple forms. The elementary principals looked for areas of celebration and areas of concern, things they could improve on, what did they want to target, what resources do they have to improve, teachers who are hitting it out of the park to learn from, teams hitting it out of the park we can learn from, and services the Professional Learning team can provide to help. They came up with rigorous learning goals and action steps. It was a great activity. They had been meeting with schools throughout the summer to go over those questions they are proud of, areas of concern to needing assistance, or teams that others can learn from. It was a great start with data conversations.

Darin Thomas said we have some great people we work with. He enjoys people and has good relationships with others. He feels that the workplace culture and relationships help you to be better. He appreciates the opportunity to do this job. He is working to understand others and help them to understand him. His goals are to support Superintendent Holmes, the Board, and the other

administrators. He is trying to be proactive and is letting the school administration know that he supports them. He will continue to work with the schools and principals to be proactive.

Jeremy Cox expressed appreciation for those he works with and thanked the Board for all the support they give. He shared four goals. First, team communication and maintaining our team communication. He said things are going to change with the location of his people and so maintaining communication as it has been is critical. Second, is improving school communication. He wants to establish more regular communication with principals on how we're doing the service and support so that we don't find out after the fact that something is going astray. He said they want to know so that they can prevent it in the first place. Third, is service and support improvements. He wants to take all the communication and create improvements within the software and within the services that they give. The last goal is security improvements. He said they actually had the opportunity to hire a security officer this year which is going to be phenomenal for Technology. One of the things that we're really going to be focused on is trying to help educate users. He said just recently they sent out a big phishing e-mail to the District Office that gave us lots of good feedback. The great thing about that is it creates an environment where people start to be aware and we're planning to do more of those types of things to help improve awareness. He said that Verizon just published a data report for the 2024 breaches that occurred with 68% of them being human error caused, humans making mistakes.

Superintendent Richard Holm thanked Jared Carson for being at the meeting and announced his promotion. He expressed his thanks for all Jared Carson has done. Superintendent Richard Holmes shared his goal sheet. First, he said he wants to stress and focus on simplify, simplify, less is more. Second, recognize school administrators. He is working on a Top Hand Award that he will share later. Third, holding early morning school breakfast or lunch to express gratitude. He will have a coin to give at the breakfast or lunch. He will continue with communication to the Board and will do school and department quarterly visits.

Becky Dunn expressed appreciation for the district administration and all they do.

CLOSED SESSION

No Closed Session was held at this time.

The Board discussed moving the August meeting from August 12 to August 5. Becky Dunn will let the Board know.

Becky Dunn mentioned the Ibigawa Japan trip November 5-11, 2024. St. George City is wanting to book tickets this week. Nannette Simmons expressed interest. Burke Staheli had also expressed interest previously.

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 p.m. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT