

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING
Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, April 23, 2026, 5:00 PM

Governing Board:

Ms. Taylor Bell
Mr. Frank Nevarez
Mr. Austin Babcock
Mr. Will David
Mr. Matthew Chavez

Also Present:

Melody Herne, Superintendent
Tari Garrison, Board Secretary
Pamela Leathers, HR Assistant
Lynn Leonard, Finance Director
Heather Robertson, Equipment and Facilities Manager
Yancey DeVore, Athletic Director
Dave Beery, Principal

Meeting Started at: 5:00 PM

I. OPENING

I.1. Call to Order

I.2. Roll Call

- President Bell – Here
- Vice President Nevarez – Absent
- Member Babcock – Here
- Member David – Here
- Member Chavez – Here

I.3. Pledge of Allegiance

I.4. Moment of Silence

I.5. Adoption of Agenda

Motion to Adopt the Agenda as presented by Member David and seconded by Member Chavez.

- President Bell – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 4-0

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II. BOARD MEETING MINUTES NOT PREVIOUSLY APPROVED

II.1. **Meetings** -- April 09, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve Minutes as presented by Member Chavez, and seconded by President Bell

- President Bell – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 4-0

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**: At the conclusion of the call to the public, Board members may respond to any criticism made by an individual who addressed the Board. Board members may also direct staff to review the concern or request the item be discussed at a future meeting. Board members may not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during this open call to the public. If you have submitted a Request to Speak form, the Board President will call upon you and ask that you **please identify yourself by clearly stating for the record your name and address**. Citizens are asked to restrict their comments to three (3) minutes. Groups wishing to speak should select a spokesperson to represent the view of the group. **(Board President may refrain from reciting this section if no RTS forms have been submitted).**

1. Jackie Tutor
2. Catherine DeLaney

IV. ACTION ITEMS – CONSENT

IV.1. **Donation**

IV.2. **Approval of Routine Vouchers**

IV1. a. **Expense**

- Voucher 1038
- Voucher 1039

IV1. b. **Payroll**

- Voucher 28
- Voucher 29

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IV.3. **Personnel - HR Report**

- PA-1
- PA-2
- Consent – HR Report April 23, 2026

IV.4. **Agreements**

- FY2027 IGA for Substitute Teacher Consolidation Services between Mingus Union High School District #4 and Yavapai County
- Agreement-- Mingus Union Club Request-Equestrian Club

IV.5. **Out of State Travel Request**

- National Leadership and Skill Conference-- Alanta, GA June 1-5

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda as presented by President Bell, and seconded by Member Babcock

- President Bell – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 4-0

V. **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- **Facility Usage--** Review and discuss Mingus Union High School District's use of facilities and impact on District initiatives (Staff: Superintendent Herne). *Presentation attachment following minutes*

Superintendent Herne presented report on Mingus Union High School facility use, including community use and rental agreements, with a focus on who is using the facilities, the costs, and the impact on the district. While facility use supports important community programs and helps build student athletic programs, the district is covering many costs such as utilities, maintenance, and staffing. Unpaid and unscheduled use has increased, leading to more wear and tear on facilities and extra work for staff. Rental income is limited and does not fully cover these costs. Overall, the presentation showed the need to find a balance between keeping the facilities open to the community and protecting district resources.

The Board discussed several main topics about facility use, including responsibility, fees, public access, safety, and possible next steps.

Key Highlights of Discussion:

- Restrooms were discussed as an area of concern, as they are left open for community. Suggested possibly closing restrooms when school is unopen. However, concerns were noted that when restrooms are closed, individuals may relieve themselves elsewhere on campus, which has been a factor in keeping them open despite ongoing misuse.

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- Superintendent Herne wanted to note we don't always know who those big groups are coming in and misusing the restrooms.
- Also noted by Principal Beery that some restroom misuse/damage may be members of the transient community.

- Field lighting costs, maintenance, and staff time were discussed, including hourly costs, bulb replacement expenses, and the need for staff to operate the lights.
 - Possible future upgrades, such as adding timers (suggested by Member Babcock), were also mentioned.

- Member David discussed the possibility of closing or limiting community access to district facilities to reduce damage and safety concerns. Board Members Babcock supported exploring locks to the gate that required some type of login.

Suggested Ideas:

- Possibly increasing security deposits on rental agreements.
- A.D. DeVore suggested adding a QR entry system to track who is using the facilities/swipe access systems. --- *A concern was raised regarding how to verify the identity of individuals using the system.*
- Possibly offering a donation option for users.
- Adding additional cameras to monitor facility use. --- *Concerned raised about the time required to review footage and the difficulty in clearly identifying individuals. As well as, any new camera system would likely need to connect to the district's existing system, which could increase costs.*

- **ASBA 2027 Political Agenda Proposal--** Review of the 2026 Political Agenda and affirm or reaffirm the Governing Boards' political priorities (Staff: Superintendent Herne).

Superintendent Herne discussed the ASBA 2027 Political Agenda Proposal. It was noted that the ASBA develops this agenda each year to represent the priorities of school districts across the state. Board Member David, serving as the district's delegate.

Member David shared that, based on his experience as a delegate, rural school districts have done a strong job making their voices heard, and the ASBA agenda now better reflects needs of rural districts. He noted that many of the priorities focus on funding and staffing, with more detailed support in those areas. He also explained that ASBA and other organizations spend significant time advocating at the state level in Phoenix, and that the agenda represents a unified voice for over 200 school districts.

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VI. **ACTION ITEMS - DISTRICT BUSINESS**

- **Policy Advisory** — Volume 38, Number 2 Policy Section G Revisions (Staff: Superintendent Herne).

Superintendent stressed to the Board that the G Personnel Policies, along with the J-Student Policies are key to Mingus Union District employees. There are deleted policies which will impact the District; the Board will need to add pieces of the deleted policies to the updated policies.

Key updates included revisions to employee conduct, ethics, conflict of interest, communication, health and safety, and staff expectations, along with the addition of a new health policy and consolidation of multiple existing policies. It was also noted that these changes will require updates to the FY2027 Personnel Handbook and additional review at future meetings.

Policies discussed:

Policy GB – General Personnel Policies; Policy GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination; Policy GBAC – Indian Preference in Employment; Policy GBEA – Ethics and Code of Conduct; Policy GBEAA – Staff Conflict of Interest; Policy GBEBB – Staff Conduct with Students; Policy GBEBB – Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff Members; Policy GBEC – Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace; Policy GBED – Smoking by Staff Members; Policy GBEF – Staff Use of Digital Communications and Electronic Devices; Policy GBGA – Health (New); Policy GBGD – Workers’ Compensation; Policy GBI – Staff Participation in Political Activities; Policy GBJ – Personnel Records and Files; Policy GBK – Staff Grievances; Policy GBP – Prohibited Personnel Practices; Policy GCB – Professional Staff Contracts and Compensation.

The Board acknowledged they have read policy advisory Volume 38, Number 2.

- President Bell – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 4-0

- **Final report and recommendations of the 2026 Meet and Confer Process** -The Board will review the 2026 Meet and Confer data and will consider approval of the SY2026-27 salary increase recommendations. (Staff: Superintendent Herne)

- **Recommendation:**

Increase to FY2027 Certified Salary Determination Chart: \$500.00 added to the base salary— On the Certified Salary Determination Chart, each cell will increase by \$500.00

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Salary Increase Option: Classified staff receive a 3.0% increase to their salary. Certified staff will have \$500 added to their salary and receive a 2.25% increase

Retention Bonus: FY2026 staff (hired prior to 3/31/2026) who return in FY2027 will receive a \$1500.00 Retention Bonus paid as a live check in July 2026

Board Member David expressed while the proposed salary increases are helpful, they are still not enough to fully address overall staff pay. It was noted that there are larger issues at the state level related to education funding. Member David expressed appreciation for the updated Meet and Confer process and the increased staff participation but also noted disappointment that much of the feedback was not detailed, which made it harder to fully evaluate the recommendations.

Member Babcock had a question for Financial Director Lynn Leonard regarding state funding.

Financial Director Lynn Leonard noted that the district is not receiving additional funding from the state to support these increases. Instead, the funding comes from staffing attrition due to declining enrollment. Also shared, that the budget is being built based on projected ADM, and that the cost of the proposed increases is approximately \$218,000. With about 85% of the district's budget tied to salaries and benefits, staffing is the primary way to manage costs and shared that staffing savings are estimated at approximately \$600,000 and increases around 250,000.

Member David expressed his concern about cutting positions and expanding our curriculum (i.e. STEM program)

Member Babcock asked how many positions would be cut.

Superintendent Herne explained it is hard to give an exact number; she gave an example of being able to cover needs with existing staffing numbers.

Motion to Accept the 2026 Meet and Confer (Certified and Classified Employees) as presented by Member Chavez, and seconded by President Bell

- President Bell – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 4-0

- **Administrative Salary Increase:** The Board will discuss and possibly approve the recommendation for the FY2027 Administrative Salary increase (Staff: Superintendent Herne).

FY2027 Administrative increase will follow the classified staff recommendation of a 3.0% increase.

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Superintendent Herne presented the recommendation for an administrative salary increase for Fiscal Year 2027 following the same structure as the classified recommendation. While the certified increase reflects an overall 3% recommendation it is a combination of a percentage and a lump sum increase; it was proposed that administrators follow the classified staff recommendation of a 3% increase.

Motion to Accept the Administrative Salary Increase as presented by Member David, and seconded by Member Chavez

- President Bell – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 4-0

VII. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Member David requested:

1. **Policy Review – DBJ: Budget Reconciliation and Transfers**
Requested to revisit Policy DBJ (*Budget Reconciliation and Transfers*), particularly regarding the timing requirements currently outlined in the policy. It was noted that the process does not necessarily need to occur prior to July, and there is interest in reviewing the rationale behind the existing timeline. Any potential revisions to the policy would need to be considered prior to the start of the fiscal year.
2. **Disbursement of Funds – Use of Board Member Stamp Signatures**
Expressed concern regarding the current practice of disbursing funds using Board member signature stamps. A request was made for additional information and a possible briefing to better understand the process and controls in place before considering any changes.
3. **Compensation and Classification Study**
Recommended a compensation and classification study to review job descriptions and ensure salaries are aligned appropriately. The study would help guide decisions on meet and confer, merit pay, and new systems, while keeping pay consistent across positions. The need to stay competitive with other districts to attract and retain staff was also noted.

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VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to Approve Adjournment as presented by President Bell, and seconded by Member Babcock

- President Bell – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Motion passes 4-0

Meeting Ended at 6:44 PM

Board President

Board Vice President
