

**NYE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 21, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Wulfenstein called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Hafen Elementary School student Sebastian Escobar Vasquez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

WELCOME:

Mr. Wulfenstein welcomed everyone to the Board of Trustees meeting.

RECOGNITIONS:

Mrs. Weir introduced Mrs. Boutillier, who announced Sebastian Escobar Vasquez as the winner of the 2025 Death Valley Student Art Contest for grades 3 to 5. Sebastian's winning artwork, "Pupfish," will be prominently featured on the Death Valley National Park's website, brochures, visitor passes, and social media. She also recognized Mike and Lucy Conlin from Jostens for their generous donation of 13 yearbooks for Pahrump Valley High School seniors experiencing homelessness. Finally Mrs. Wright recognized approximately 24 dedicated retirees from across the district, acknowledging their significant contributions and years of service.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Bryan Wulfenstein, President; Nathan Gent, Vice President; Larry Small, Clerk; Leslie Campos, Member; David Harris, Member; Robert White, Member; Chelsy Fischer, Member.

Executive Cabinet/District Office staff in attendance: Joe Gent, Superintendent; Laura Weir, Assistant Superintendent; Genoveva Lopez-Angelo, Assistant Superintendent; Ray Ritchie, Chief Operating Officer; Brian Kunzi, Legal Counsel; Chelle Wright, Human Resource Director; Nate Cardinal, Director of Maintenance Operations Safety and Security; Robert Williams, Director of Technology; and Iliana Garcia, Executive Assistant.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Small requested that item 8D, Distance Education Program Renewal from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028, be removed from the Consent Agenda and moved to an individual item after 9A.

Mrs. Fischer requested that item number 18, To propose and appoint the creation of a Teacher Council Committee to facilitate feedback from teachers to the Board, enhancing school level decision making, be moved to after 9A as well.

GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT

Arthur Hodge expressed concern about the amount of prepackaged food being served to students, stating it is unhealthy and a waste of money. He advocated for more cooked meals and questioned the quality of subsidized government food.

Stacy DeVoid, a teacher at Hafen Elementary School, spoke in support of creating a teacher advisory committee to work with the school board. Mrs. DeVoid believes this committee would allow for more in-depth conversations about the impact of board and administration decisions on teachers.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve, disapprove, amend, or modify the April 17, 2025, minutes
- Approve, disapprove, amend, or modify the April 17, 2025, closed session minutes
- NCSD 3rd Quarterly
- Approval of Distance Education Program Renewal from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025.

Mr. Harris made a motion to approve 8A with the corrected items under Roll Call and Board Reports, 8B, and 8C on the Consent Agenda and to remove item 8D as an individual item. Mr. White seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of all in favor 7-0.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Lopez-Angelo introduced Mt. Charleston and Pathways School's Principal, Holly Riggs, who shared highlights about the schools via PowerPoint. Mrs. Riggs presented an overview of the distance and alternative education program, which is currently rated as a one-star school with approximately 270 students. The school's focus this year is on increasing student credit attainment and attendance, aided by an interventionist and a new online learning management system called Edgenuity. She then highlighted Mt. Charleston's focus on promoting family and community engagement, resulting in ten separate events including garden and literacy events, a winter ball, and a spring carnival. Enrollment is up, and they successfully hosted a kinder roundup and clapout celebration; she welcomed the new administrator for next year Mrs. Elizabeth Gilligan.

Mr. Cardinal gave an update on district projects, he presented photos showing the construction process, including the chassis, flooring, wall construction, roofing, and modular assembly, emphasizing the quality and robust nature of the buildings in Arizona, noting that it is on schedule with the first modulares expected to arrive the first week of June. The modular construction is expected to save money on labor costs due to prevailing wage laws in Arizona. He also reported that the HVAC replacement at RCMS is paused until June 15th, with infrastructure and electrical work completed and a dropped wire repaired. The Round Mountain school roof is about 75% complete, with positive feedback regarding fewer leaks; water tanks are also progressing, and the Beatty High School HVAC job starts June 2nd. Carpet replacement and cleaning orders have been placed for the summer.

Mrs. Weir proudly presented a highlight of impressive athletic achievements from our high schools, showcasing the dedication and talent of our student-athletes.

Mrs. Lopez-Angelo presented an update on enhancing board goal one, which has been revised to be a clear, focused, and measurable smart goal with a specific timeline and benchmarks for integrating essential standards into instruction. This update will allow for ongoing monitoring and alignment of instructional practices to improve student learning outcomes, and this approach could potentially be applied to all board goals. She also provided a reminder of future Board topics on the agenda, including informationals on the spelling bee, attendance, discipline plan, and music.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Gent reported on the district's five-year strategic plan, highlighting the plan's vision, mission and key focus areas. Highlighting leadership development, he noted that 36 district leaders are currently receiving coaching from Dale Carnegie. This includes feedback from subordinates, themselves, and supervisors revealing four major highpoint trends: initiative, positive attitude, willingness to accept new challenges, and a poised confident demeanor. The alignment in scores between individuals and their managers are positive, indicating a healthy and improving organizational culture focused on proactive problem-solving, innovation, employee empowerment, self-efficacy, and growth mindset.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. White provided an update on the recent Title I Committee of Practitioners meeting, sharing news about grant allocations and highlighting successful initiatives at Amargosa Schools.

Mrs. Campos attended the athletic banquet in Tonopah, which raised over \$47,000 for student athletes. She also attended the Hope Squat Hope Walk in Tonopah, which had participation from middle and high school students and local resources.

Mr. Harris participated in a Zoom meeting focused on District Goals and a discipline policy meeting, seeking input from those directly involved in schools. He attended Water Day at Floyd Elementary and noted that Kiwanis staffed the concession stands during the recent state baseball tournament. He also had the pleasure of attending the Special Education Prom, describing it as a truly wonderful event. Finally, Mr. Harris also attended a Board training session on cybersecurity, a vital area for the district. He thanked Rob for his hard work in this field.

Mr. Gent thanked all administrators, teachers and staff for a successful year.

Mrs. Fischer thanked Mrs. Boutillier and the District administration for all their hard work and dedication in bringing art and other programs to our schools. She also provided an update on the Buddy Bench initiative, sharing that Hafen Elementary successfully raised the necessary funds to make it a reality.

Mr. Small attended Family Day at JG Johnson. He also participated in both the Student Advisory Committee Meeting and Restorative Justice meetings.

Mr. Wulfenstein expressed his gratitude, thanking the Board and all involved for their ongoing efforts and unwavering dedication to students.

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM RENEWAL FROM JULY 1, 2025 TO JUNE 30, 2025

Mrs. Riggs presented the required renewal of the distance education license, which occurs every three years, similar to the alternative education license. They explained that the process involves answering questions about attendance and monitoring student progress, requiring board approval before submission to the state. As a relatively new principal, this was Mrs. Riggs first time submitting this. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Small made a motion to approve the Distance Education Program Renewal dated from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028. Mrs. Fischer seconded, and the motion passed with a vote all in favor 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2025-2026 TENTATIVE BUDGET

Ray Ritchie presented the district's compliant tentative budget. All current general fund positions are retained, with Pahrump Valley High teaching roles now in the general fund. Special education added a health aide and paraprofessional, and a BCBA will become a permanent employee for cost savings. The general fund's projected ending balance is less than the required amount of 4%; the district has reduced the budget to minimal operations. The district is not in a financial position to maintain an ending fund balance of 4% unless additional funding is received from the state, right now it is projected at \$65,000. Mr. Ritchie spoke about the Governor's proposed budget of a \$2 increase this year; he has budgeted to transfer the rest of the SRS funds, about 1.6 million, to the general fund and to transfer \$16 million to special education. The only significant change in the general fund budget is an anticipated increase in PERS contributions. The district implemented a \$2.1 million cut from general fund supplies, directing departments to use alternative funding sources like the educational endowment fund for curriculum and instruction. No textbook adoption is planned, and transportation cuts are manageable due to a newer bus fleet. Mr. Ritchie hopes the legislative session won't negatively impact the budget. The Title One funding has a statewide cut of \$5 million, but the local impact is yet to be determined, and administrators have

been prepared for a cut in Title One; A new capital improvement plan is due in July, and a budget of \$200,000 has been allocated for transportation's white fleet purchases. Impact fees could generate half a million dollars this year. Student population remains stable; Bond projects like Tonopah Elementary (Jan 2026 completion) are progressing. The district carries about \$62 million in debt. Health insurance and workers' compensation funds are self-insured and healthy. Recruitment for BCBA's and speech therapists faces nationwide competition and fewer graduates. Discussion ensued.

GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT

No Public Comment.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF THE 2025-2026 FINAL BUDGET

Mr. Ritchie requested that the board approve the tentative budget as the final budget to meet state submission deadlines.

Mr. Wulfenstein made a motion to approve the Budget. Mr. Small seconded, and the motion passed with a vote all in favor 7-0.

UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SCHOOL MENU ITEMS AND REVIEW OF MANAGER SURVEY FEEDBACK

Mrs. Glenn, Ledbetter, and Forney presented new and existing food product options for the school menu, considering nutritional guidelines, student feedback, menu costs, allergies, and a food waste reduction program.

2024-2025 SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

Mrs. Wright presented the evaluation process and deadlines for Dr. Gent's upcoming evaluation, noting that feedback from the previous year was incorporated. The evaluation form, staff survey results, and comments would be provided, with the form being a Google form, though paper copies are available. The deadline for submitting the evaluation form is Friday, May 30th, and reminders will be sent. The compiled evaluation data would be presented at the June 12th board meeting for a vote of satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Mr. Small made a motion to approve item 15. Mr. White seconded, and the motion passed with a majority vote in favor 6-0. Mr. Gent abstained.

PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL PROGRESS ON THE NYE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS

Dr. Gent updated the Board on student academic achievement, noting that while there's room for growth, NWEA projections show improvement in math and ELA. He also requested that the Board consider adjusting the current five strategic goals, which Mrs. Lopez-Angelo is refining into SMART goals. If not approved, a workshop will be needed to discuss alternatives. He spoke about Instructional Framework the curriculum department is developing an instructional framework and common language based on essential standards, with 77% of staff now using them to enhance practice; Staff Development a comprehensive plan for recruiting, developing, and retaining staff is in place, with retention data due next fall; Family Engagement efforts are underway to increase parent involvement across all schools, using fall conference attendance as a baseline; School Safety & Custodial Services the district aims for 100% of schools to improve cleanliness and physical safety by the end of the 2024-2025 school year through standardized guidelines; Curriculum Alignment: Nevada's academic standards, used by the curriculum department with teacher feedback, align with national tests. Discussion ensued.

CLOSED SESSION- MEETING WITH MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIONS REGARDING COLLECTIVE DISCUSSIONS PURSUANT TO NRS 288.220

Closed Session started at 8:39 pm

Closed Session ended at 9:03 pm

Regular Session Resumed at 9:03 pm

DISCUSSION AND UPDATES ON RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE MEASURES AFFECTING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mrs. Fischer provided an update on two education bills in the Nevada Legislature. Senate Bill 396 (Special Education Support): Aims to enhance special education support and professional development. Currently under review by the Senate Finance Committee. Assembly Bill 584 (Governor's Education Bill): Faces significant opposition over accountability measures and a provision granting voting power to appointed school board members, raising concerns about state overreach, legal costs, and school choice impact. Positives include proposed "Innovation Schools" offering board autonomy and the integration of special education techniques into general education.

TO PROPOSE AND APPOINT THE CREATION OF A TEACHER COUNCIL COMMITTEE TO FACILITATE FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS TO THE BOARD ENHANCING SCHOOL LEVEL DECISION MAKING

Mrs. Fischer proposed forming a Teacher Council Committee. This committee will aim to gather teacher feedback on curriculum, resources, professional development, and legislation, ensuring open communication without fear of reprisal.

Mr. Wulfenstein made a motion to direct staff to create a teacher council committee plan to come before the Board for possible action. Mr. White seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of all in favor 7-0.

2025 NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS (NASB) AWARD NOMINATION FORMS

Mr. Small shared details regarding the upcoming Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) award nominations, noting the August 15th deadline. To streamline the process, Mr. Small suggested a practical approach: revisiting and updating previous nominations that were not accepted.

INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN MATHEMATICS AND ENGLISH CLASSES

Mr. Williams provided an update on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in mathematics and English classes. He clarified that the tools being implemented are primarily large language models, which operate based on pattern recognition. He outlined employee access levels to these various AI tools while strongly emphasizing the protection of student data. Crucially, student access to these AI tools is currently prohibited due to age restrictions and the lack of proper parental consent mechanisms. He also highlighted AI's significant potential to assist teachers with tasks like lesson planning and summarization, demonstrating how these tools can support educators.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF THE NCSD WARRANTS:

Mr. Gent made a motion to approve the warrants. Mrs. Fischer seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of all in favor 7-0.

DISCUSSION REGARDING FUTURE BOARD MEETING TOPICS:

Mr. Small suggested addressing the turf at JG Johnson, proposing that the district begin seeking bids or exploring a community partnership to facilitate its repair. Additionally, he requested that a Board schedule to visit schools be created, possibly once a quarter.

Mrs. Fischer requested an update on Hope Squad.

Mr. Harris would like an informational on the attendance policy.

DISCUSSION TO APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, AMEND, OR MODIFY THE DATE OR ATTENDANCE AREA OF FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS:

No changes were made.

GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT:

Scot Troter discussed highlights and spacing at Mt. Charleston Elementary School.

Alison Matulich highlighted Mt. Charleston, extending a Board invitation to the school. She also spoke on food service and supported the teacher council committee.

ADJOURNMENT:

10:20 pm

By _____

Larry Small, Clerk