

**NYE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
April 16, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Campos, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mrs. Jeffrey from Tonopah led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**WELCOME**

Mrs. Campos welcomed everyone to the Board of Trustees meeting.

**RECOGNITIONS**

Mrs. Weir announced that the Pahrump Valley High School football team was randomly selected to attend Day 2 of the Las Vegas Raiders Draft Party on April 24, 2026. The Raiders are providing a charter bus, and students may meet the first-round draft pick.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

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

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

No change.

**GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT**

Lisa Maslach (Tonopah School Counselor): Shared positive feedback from students regarding the Hope Squad program and expressed a desire for any alternative mental health programs to be equally inclusive and supportive.

Daniel Cliff (Pathways Teacher): Submitted an online comment supporting Martin Daffer for the Area 3 Trustee vacancy, citing Daffer’s lifelong residency and commitment to the community.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approve, disapprove, amend, or modify the March 19, 2026, minutes
- Approve, disapprove, amend, or modify the March 19, 2026, Closed Session minutes

Mr. White made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Gent seconded, and the motion passed with a vote all in favor 6-0.

**ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

Mrs. Lopez-Angelo introduced Tonopah Principal Melinda Jeffrey, who presented a report on the school’s recent progress. Principal Jeffrey highlighted significant growth in NWEA reading data across all grade levels and provided an update on current school star ratings. She also celebrated the success of the annual career fair and recognized recent student achievements in athletics.

Mrs. Lopez-Angelo announced the addition of new cursive writing resources, which are now available to students via the district website. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Cardinal provided a project update covering landscaping and the scheduled move date for Tonopah Elementary School, sports complex proposals, and the upcoming dates for district Hazmat Vulnerability Assessments. He also reported on HVAC and roofing projects across various sites, noting that asphalt sealing at RCMS and Manse is scheduled for May. Furthermore, the cooler and freezer replacement projects have been submitted and remain on schedule. Discussion ensued.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Gent provided a budget briefing, highlighting the fiscal challenges posed by flat funding and rising personnel expenditures. In response, he announced an immediate soft hiring freeze. He also gave a reminder of the upcoming public budget workshops scheduled for May 8 and May 15, 2026.

### **BOARD REPORTS:**

Mr. White provided an update on the recent NASB meeting in Reno, specifically highlighting initiatives within northern districts. He discussed school emergency planning and the 'Learner-Centered Bright Spots' program, which utilizes peer-to-peer mentoring to build problem-solving skills. Additionally, he noted that Nye County currently leads the state in time allocated for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Mrs. Fisher shared information from the USDA state director regarding potential grants for improved school meal programs. She also expressed concerns regarding the lack of uniform performance metrics and curriculum consistency, particularly at the elementary level. She requested increased support for teacher development and noted that previous long-term benchmarks for academic improvement have not yet been met.

Mr. Small commended Principals Mr. Wind and Mrs. Jeffrey following his recent visits to the Round Mountain and Tonopah schools. He specifically highlighted Mr. Wind's effective leadership and lauded the success of Tonopah's recent career fair. Mr. Small also reminded the board of the upcoming NASB training scheduled for the 25th in Las Vegas.

Mr. Harris reported on the success of two community Easter events held during spring break, noting an impressive turnout. With 10,000 eggs distributed, he expressed his sincere gratitude for the overwhelming community support and the generous donations that made the events possible.

### **INTERVIEW OF CANDIDATES TO FILL THE TRUSTEE VACANCY FOR AREA III**

Mrs. Campos introduced herself and the board members, outlining their respective roles and areas of representation. She expressed her appreciation to both candidates for their interest in serving Nye County students. For the proceedings, she recommended a ten-minute timeframe per interview, utilizing four standardized questions focused on motivation, community insight, and decision-making. The interviews were conducted in the order that letters of interest were received, beginning with Mrs. Race, followed by Mr. Daffer, in that order.

### **APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEE TO AREA III VACANCY**

Mr. Gent thanked both candidates for their interest and noted his appreciation for the public comment that was received. He specifically highlighted Mr. Daffer's extensive construction background, deep community roots, and involvement. Mr. Gent then moved to appoint Martin Daffer to fill the Area III vacancy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Small, and Mrs. Campos opened the floor for further discussion. During the discussion, Mrs. Fischer thanked both applicants and spoke to their individual strengths. She clarified that, as no one filed for the seat during the regular election cycle, this appointment would conclude in December. Mrs. Campos also expressed gratitude for the candidates' thoughtful

responses. Mr. Harris shared his personal experience of previously applying for a vacancy; he encouraged the candidates by noting that although he was not initially appointed by the Board, he was later elected in a general election.

Mrs. Campos called for a vote, which resulted as follows: Ayes: Mrs. Campos, Mr. Harris, Mr. White, Mr. Gent, and Mr. Small; Nays: Mrs. Fischer. The motion passed 5-1. Mr. Daffer was officially appointed to represent Area III.

### **PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT A UNIVERSAL MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Mrs. Weir presented and proposed implementing Erica's Lighthouse to expand mental health education to the lower grades and replace the current Hope Squad model. Based on school feedback, Mrs. Weir emphasized the transition to a broader approach, moving away from peer-nominated selection to ensure every student receives vital mental health resources. Erica's Lighthouse includes universal classroom education, inclusive empowerment clubs, policy/staff training, and robust family engagement. To ensure equity, resources such as workbooks are available to all families in multiple formats, including Spanish-language and audio versions. The program is listed on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) Best Practices Registry, the curriculum focuses on reducing stigma and teaching students how to safely connect peers with trusted adults. To ensure campus-specific feasibility, Mrs. Weir will collaborate with principals to finalize scheduling and determine whether lessons will be led by teachers or counselors. Mrs. Fischer asks that any additional programs or changes be brought to the Board for approval. Mrs. Weir proposed to provide quarterly reports on the program. Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Fischer made a motion to adopt Erica's Lighthouse program for the 2026-2027 SY only. Mr. White seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of all in favor, 6-0.

### **DISCIPLINE/RESTORATIVE JUSTICE QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Mrs. Weir presented a comparative analysis of behavioral data from August through March, highlighting a significant districtwide decrease in total incidents from 3,043 to 2,370. This reduction spanned all school levels and various locations, including classrooms and bus stops, with notable declines in fighting and battery against both students and staff. While tobacco-related incidents shifted predominantly toward vaping, severe disciplinary actions saw a sharp decrease, as combined expulsions and Habitual Disciplinary Problem (HDP) placements dropped from 35 to 5. Pahrump Valley High School demonstrated the most substantial improvement, reducing incidents from 742 to 362. Staff attributed these trends to the consistent application of proactive practices alongside strict consequences for serious offenses, further supported by a new Student Data Analytics (SDA) dashboard that has enhanced the accuracy, data monitoring, and support in Dr. Weaver's office. Discussion ensued.

### **PROJECT UPDATE ON THE PONDEROSA SOLAR PROJECT (Amargosa Valley)**

Mr. Ritchie provided an informational update on the Ponderosa Solar Project and a briefing on the Amargosa School water situation. Representatives Ray and Nate reported that the solar project is scheduled to acquire the Ponderosa Dairy on January 1, 2028. While current enrollment remains stable, the district continues to monitor the situation, noting that future fiscal viability may necessitate student busing; however, any potential school closure would require formal Board approval. Mr. Kunzi highlighted a potential community partnership with the solar project to transfer excess water rights to the school to address ongoing arsenic issues. Regarding infrastructure, the district has pivoted to a well-based reverse osmosis plan following the failure of previous pilot systems. Discussion ensued.

### **2025-2026 SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION PROCESS & DEADLINES**

Mrs. Wright outlined the evaluation process and upcoming deadlines for Superintendent Dr. Gent's annual performance review, noting that criteria from the previous years have been incorporated into the current

process. While paper copies are available upon request, the digital evaluation form will be distributed following the May 20th Board Meeting. All ratings and feedback provided by each Board Member will be open and available to the public. The submission deadline is Friday, May 29, 2026, and subsequent reminders will be issued to ensure timely completion. The compiled data and rating will be presented at the June 11th Board Meeting.

Mr. Small made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Superintendent process and dates. Mrs. Fischer seconded, and the motion passed 5-0, with one abstention by Mr. Gent due to a conflict.

**APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, AMEND, OR MODIFY THE 2026-2027 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

Mr. Small proposed adjusting the Board Meeting start time to 6:00 PM to better accommodate working parents. In response, Mrs. Weir noted the impact on staff who begin their workdays early, while Mrs. Campos raised concerns regarding the existing length of the meetings. Mrs. Fischer inquired if the request was related to sports or student recognitions, suggesting that those specific items could potentially be moved later in the agenda if necessary. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Small made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 School Board Meeting Schedule. Mr. White seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of all in favor 6-0.

**DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF THE NCSW WARRANTS:**

Mr. Small made a motion to approve the warrants. Mr. Gent seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of all in favor 6-0.

**DISCUSSION REGARDING FUTURE BOARD MEETING TOPICS:**

Mr. Harris asked about the fourth and fifth-grade grading results.

Mr. Small asked for a Transportation Update from Mr. Hush.

Mr. Gent requested quarterly updates on the new Erica's Lighthouse mental health program, with the initial report to be presented in September.

Mr. White requested a review of Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to evaluate its effectiveness, with Mr. Harris suggesting an increase to the school day if the current model fails to show improvement.

Mrs. Fischer raised concerns regarding teacher support and the quality of NEPF feedback, requesting a sample of the guidance provided to staff based on feedback from the Teacher Advisory Council (TAC). Dr. Gent requested Mrs. Fischer submit her inquiry in writing and committed to placing a PLC update on the May or June agenda following a Cabinet review.

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

None.

**GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

8:07 PM

By \_\_\_\_\_

David Harris, Clerk