

**NYE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 17, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Wulfenstein called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Tonopah High School students Remington Cobb, Ryan Jeffrey, Levi Harhay, and Franco Caldera Avelar led the Pledge of Allegiance.

WELCOME:

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

RECOGNITIONS:

Mrs. Weir presented several recognitions. She began by acknowledging Mrs. Debrowski and Mrs. Gibson from the Daughters of the American Revolution, who honored winning PVHS Art students for their achievements in a poster contest. Notably, the 11th and 12th grade winners received first place nationally. Mrs. Weir also recognized valuable community partners: Portia and Chris from Porta Subs for donating lunches to McKinney Vento PVHS students, and Nancy and Arlene from Desert Greens for their generous monetary donation.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Bryan Wulfenstein, President; Nathan Gent, Vice President; Larry Small, Clerk; Leslie Campos, Member; David Harris, Member; Robert White, Member; Leslie Campos, 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, (via phone); Chelle Wright, Human Resource Director; Nate Cardinal, Director of Maintenance Operations Safety and Security; Robert Williams, Director of Technology; Alma Williams, and Iliana Garcia, Executive Assistants.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Small requested that item 8D, Recurring Grants 2025-2025, be removed from the Consent Agenda and moved to section 9.

GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT

Melissa Godfrey spoke about being in support of an all-day Pre-K program (Item 8) for Tonopah regarding upcoming grants, noting Pahrump's eight classrooms compared to only partial programs in Tonopah/Amargosa. She stated a list of interested families has already started, including her own twins, and conveyed strong parent support, cautioning that a partial program would likely lower enrollment.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve, disapprove, amend, or modify the March 20, 2025, minutes
- Approve, disapprove, amend, or modify the March 20, 2025, closed session minutes
- Approve, amend, or modify - Second Reading NCSD Policy - 5601 Academic Plans for Secondary Students
- Approval of Recurring Grants for 2025-2026

Mr. Gent made a motion to approve 8A, 8B, and 8C on the Consent Agenda and to remove item 8D as an individual item. Mrs. Fischer seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of all in favor 7-0.

APPROVAL OF RECURRING GRANTS FOR 2025-2026

Mrs. Holley presented the list of recurring grants. Mr. Small asked about changes. Mrs. Holley noted it is a shorter list as ESSER ended, and at the end of the school year, AB495 federal grants will end. Stable grants are being applied for at preliminary, prior-year amounts, as final federal allocations are unknown. Applications are being submitted early this year to ensure state approval by July 1st. Mrs. Holley had no updates on potential new federal grants but hoped for information from an upcoming conference. She clarified that "partial" for Tonopah/Amargosa Pre-K refers to partial *funding* requiring blending multiple grants based on student eligibility, not a partial school day, confirming this is a historical practice.

Mr. Gent made a motion to approve agenda item 8D, Mr. Small seconded, and the motion passed with a vote all in favor 7-0.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Lopez-Angelo introduced Tonopah School's Principal, Melinda Jeffrey, who shared highlights about Tonopah Schools via PowerPoint. Mrs. Jeffrey spoke about School Ratings: Tonopah Elementary is a 1-star school, with plans to improve next year. Middle and High Schools are 3-star. Academic Performance: Math data is generally stronger than reading data, with teachers using the Savvas program effectively. Reading shows struggles across all grades (K-12), particularly in elementary, with many students on Read by Grade Three plans. High School math uses an effective online teacher while recruiting for an in-person one. Improvement Plans (Next Year): Elementary will implement a "walk to read" intervention, grouping students by need. Middle and High Schools will add two 30-minute Tier 2 intervention blocks for reading and math. Recent Highlights:

- The football team played in the 1A state game at Allegiant Stadium (Nov 26, 2024).
- A successful Christmas program was held.
- Well-attended Literacy Night during Nevada Reading Week (March 5).
- Fourth annual Career Fair saw significant growth (53 tables) and positive feedback, making the local paper.

Next Steps: Focus on improving elementary rating, implementing intervention plans, recruiting a high school math teacher, and finalizing scheduling/staffing for next year.

Mrs. Weir and Mrs. Lopez-Angelo gave an update on the Board Goals: **District Goal Updates:**

- **Goal 1 (PLC Roundtables & Essential Standards):** Dr. Gent completed PLC roundtables at all schools. Essential standards have been updated based on teacher feedback shared district-wide for core content areas.
- **Goal 2 (Standards-Based Report Card):** The standards-based report card survey was sent to parents under the standards-based reporting system (Kinder, 1st, and 2nd grade parents). Significant feedback has been received, and the report card is being updated. Marzano/Solution Tree professional learning around the PLC process has been scheduled.
- **Goal 3 (Safe School Safety & Compliance):** New safety and compliance courses have been added, including behavior management and restorative justice topics. Positions for support and training have been identified.
- **Goal 4 (Parent & Family Engagement):** The family engagement survey went out to families on March 16th/17th. Two district employees will attend the national family engagement conference.
- **Goal 5 (Custodial Operations):** Consistent district-wide custodial hours have been established in coordination with maintenance and rural administrators, clarifying day and night responsibilities and ensuring cleaning occurs when students are not in classrooms.

Mrs. Weir provided a Hope Squad update. She spoke about a District-Wide Hope Walk: Hope Squad advisors are planning a district-wide "Hope Walk" for Saturday, September 6th, to be held in each

community. Planning is ongoing and led by RCMS advisor Alicia Lewis. Details will be advertised once they are finalized. Exploring Elementary Social-Emotional Support: The district is exploring K-12 social-emotional programs for elementary students, similar to Hope Squad. A meeting is scheduled with a potential provider to discuss feasibility and cost. A board review of any proposed program was requested due to parental sensitivity.

Tonopah Elementary: The Project is on schedule. Retaining walls for stairs/ramps and kitchen FRP/tile flooring are complete. Concrete for the stairs is expected soon. CORE went to Arizona and confirmed the long-lead items (HVAC, steel, chassis) are arriving/being assembled. Mr. Cardinal will inspect modular construction around May 20th. Round Mountain and Beatty Elementary: Roofing material has been delivered. Fertilization and plugging of the practice field are complete. Baseball Fields: Work has been done on the baseball fields (Mr. Wulfenstein thanked Mr. Cardinal for this). Tonopah Elementary Costs: Dr. Gent noted the project's significant sturdiness due to extra foundation work (\$100k+ for hard digging into granite). Mr. Cardinal confirmed this, stating additional fees and unforeseen items have increased the overall project cost by over \$2 million from the initial \$25 million. Electrical lines are also set in granite.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Gent provided updates on several important areas. He highlighted the potential Hope Squad Replacement: Discussion on a potential K-12 replacement program for Hope Squad; board involvement is assured if a change is recommended. He spoke about the upcoming Budget Workshops scheduled for May 9th and 16th; Board Members are invited to attend one session in-person or virtual (invite to follow).

Tonopah Sports Complex Vision: Vision shared for the Tonopah Sports Complex to become a state-level hosting site for NIAA events, leveraging Tonopah's location and amenities for community economic benefit and promoting staff development in event hosting.

He also spoke about a media source, PVC.news, Pahrump Valley Community News, by Amy Veloz, that showcases positive Pahrump schools stories. She will be sending an email link for the Board to view if interested (Mr. Williams shared the link).

District Core Focus: Reiteration that all district activities aim to improve instructional practice and increase student achievement, with a focus on long-term growth, staff feedback, and continuous improvement despite challenges.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. White commended Floyd Elementary, specifically Mrs. Jennifer Hargis, for the recent spelling bee. While unable to attend for the whole duration, the portion observed was noted as exceptionally well-organized, with students performing commendably and displaying excellent behavior, including those not actively participating.

Mr. Small encouraged board members to review valuable emails from a new vendor associated with the Effective School Boards website. He also noted an upcoming free Zoom meeting hosted by this vendor on May 9th, inviting interested members to register and participate, highlighting the value of these national sessions (e.g., previous discussion on consent agendas).

Mr. Gent reported on his recent visit to the Tonopah Elementary School's new construction site, he expressed particular impression regarding the installation of the new red block walls, noting their striking color. Overall, Mr. Gent conveyed strong satisfaction with the significant advancement and progress achieved at the site and extended his sincere thanks to all involved for their hard work.

Mrs. Fischer commended Floyd Elementary/Mrs. Hargis for a successful spelling bee and expressing interest in a district-wide event. She recognized PVHS student Luigi D'Angelis for his International Thespian Festival invitation and fundraising efforts. She also mentioned a meaningful Holocaust survivor visit at the high school and wished Iliana a late happy birthday. Mrs. Fischer detailed work at Hafen Elementary supporting the student council's buddy bench fundraising and conducting anti-bullying

activities with a 5th-grade class, which included a challenging discussion followed by positive affirmation art. She noted Hafen students sent a thank-you letter to Governor Lombardo and are writing fundraising letters for the buddy bench, concluding with a report on visiting Amargosa Valley Schools and donating books.

Mr. Wulfenstein shared his participation in the staff vs. students basketball game, humorously highlighting blocking a student's shot and thanking Mr. Curtis for yearbook inclusion, adding it was an enjoyable event despite a loss. He concluded by thanking the Board for their service and the staff for their reports and hard work, conveying the Board's collective appreciation.

PRESENTATION BY JNA CONSULTANT, MARTY JOHNSON, REGARDING BONDING PROCESS

Marty Johnson (J Consulting Group) provided an update on the district's ~\$90-92 million, ~8-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Funded primarily by the dedicated 58.5-cent property tax rate, the district has the capacity to afford all planned projects. Currently, \$10 million in previously authorized bonds can be issued. Mr. Johnson recommended utilizing the State's Permanent School Fund program (~\$20M capacity available) for the upcoming bond issue, as this guarantee raises the bond rating from A1 to AAA, potentially saving ~\$300,000 by lowering borrowing costs (this program is a guarantee, not direct funding).

Discussion and possible action adopting resolution for the financing of school improvements; authorization for the Chief Operating Officer or the Superintendent to provide for the sale of general obligation school improvement bonds not to exceed an aggregate amount of \$10,000,000 and establishing such conditions/terms deemed necessary, and providing for an effective date for a presentation regarding the sale of bonds by the retained consultant

Mr. Johnson requested authorization to initiate the \$10 million bond issuance process. He stated that approval from the State Board of Finance is anticipated at the August 20th meeting, based on their current schedule. He clarified that this authorization begins the process, but the Board will need to approve the final bond documents, likely at the August meeting, to finalize the issuance. Funds are expected to be received in late September or early October. Mr. Wulfenstein asked to briefly specify the projects funded by this issuance. Mr. Ray Richie confirmed the funding is primarily for the Tonopah Sports Complex, emphasizing its critical importance for the project's completion.

Mrs. Campos made a motion to approve item number 11. Mrs. Fischer seconded, and the motion passed with a vote all in favor 7-0.

Discussion and possible action regarding the scope, content, and timing of the design and construction of the Tonopah High School sports complex

Mr. Cardinal, Chris, and Avery from CORE (via phone) centered on whether to construct the Tonopah Sports Complex in one or two phases. The two-phase option carries an estimated \$400,000 higher cost and risk of negative community perception due to a pause in construction. However, both options share the same overall completion timeline and potential risk of disrupting the football season. Key long-lead items include lights (9-11 weeks) and bleachers (12-15 weeks), with electrical equipment also having potentially long lead times. Mr. Wulfenstein asked about a new transformer, Chris replied that it is a possibility, but the hope is to utilize the existing transformer; if it needs to be upsized, it may take up to or more than (16- 20+ weeks). Mr. Wulfenstein specified to Mrs. Campos that he did not want the perception to be that they are delaying the process and asked for her feedback, and she asked that as long as the community is kept in the loop, she favored the single-phase approach due to cost savings and continuous progress, despite the shared risk of disruption. To mitigate the risk of future cost increases with a single

phase, the strategy involves expedited procurement of materials after bond approval. The one-phase approach was likely to cause less overall interruption than stopping and restarting construction.

Mrs. Campos made a motion to approve item 12, the single-phase GMP approach. Mr. Small seconded, and the motion passed with a vote all in favor 7-0.

Award bid for the purchase of 335 Lenovo Thinkcentre M70q Gen 5 Tiny desktop computers to T&S Technologies in the amount of \$249,240.00 as the lowest, responsible bidder, and reject the bid from Insight Infinity due to failure to comply with the minimum required product specifications

Mr. Williams presented information regarding the upcoming summer computer refresh cycle.

This initiative involves replacing 335 desktop computers as part of the district's standard five-year technology refresh for all schools. Schools included in this cycle are the Beatty schools, Amargosa schools, and Rosemary Clarke Middle School (noted as having a significant number of replacements). The refresh is a well-researched annual process, involving site walkthroughs and consultations with principals, and is funded through the annual budget. Mr. Williams stated that, based on recent state contract training, this annual process is being formally brought before the board for review. This marks the second rotation through the five-year cycle. The type of computers being replaced are desktop computers.

Mr. Wulfenstein made a motion to approve item 13. Mr. Gent seconded, and the motion passed with a vote all in favor 7-0.

DISCUSSION AND UPDATES ON RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE MEASURES AFFECTING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mrs. Fischer provided an update on legislative and government relations. She is monitoring state bills as they advance post-deadline. She met with Governor Lombardo's staff to discuss a pending education accountability bill, voicing concerns about potential legislative power over staff termination. She reported federal grants are currently not at risk while awaiting a federal response. Mrs. Fischer expressed strong concern that federal representatives have ignored her outreach regarding the special education crisis for two and a half years.

DISCUSSION OF HOPE SQUAD IMPLEMENTATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. EXPLORING POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND AGE-APPROPRIATE MODELS

Mrs. Fischer reported on student social-emotional needs, emphasizing challenges highlighted by recent interactions and the importance of trauma-informed practices and related staff training. Research is underway for elementary social-emotional programs, with a focus on enhancing (not replacing) existing support like Hope Squad, given current staff and resource limitations. Mandatory staff training is currently limited to suicide awareness, and there is a recognized need for more consistent, embedded social-emotional training. Staff will continue researching options to bring recommendations to the board.

UPDATE OF CERTIFIED VACANCIES

Mrs. Wright updated on certified staffing, reporting decreasing vacancies (currently 33) and significantly increasing retention rates (~92%). She attributed this to effective recruitment and retention strategies, including "growing our own" programs and streamlined hiring. Board members commended her work, crediting the positive results to state-level changes, her proactive approach, and recent salary increases.

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

Closed Session started at 7:37 pm

Closed Session ended at 8:45 pm

Regular Session Resumed at 8:48 pm

APPROVE, DISAPPROVE, AMEND, OR MODIFY THE 2025-2026 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Discussion was held regarding the August 21st meeting scheduled for Gabbs, noting previous issues with low community participation and technological challenges. Options included moving the meeting to Pahrump or Tonopah, possibly supplemented by a separate Board visit to Gabbs schools. Following input suggesting consultation with the Gabbs community and staff, the Board decided to table the decision for now, leaving the August 21st location unchanged at this time, and will revisit the topic on a future agenda after gathering community input.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF THE NCSD WARRANTS:

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

DISCUSSION REGARDING FUTURE BOARD MEETING TOPICS:

Mr. Harris would like an informational presentation by a district leader on the attendance policy and chronic absenteeism.

Mrs. Fischer had questions about the nudge letters and how it's being recorded to state, including NRS interpretation and student disability counts, she will be providing ongoing updates on legislation, and would like to investigate the cost and feasibility of developing outdoor facilities at Amargosa.

Mr. White would like to schedule an action item to revisit and consider reinstating district wide Spelling Bee.

Mr. Wulfenstein would like to include an update on elementary Hope Squad/emotional assistance programs on an upcoming agenda, continued Tonopah Sports Complex progress, and the cost to remove the old B building at the high school, and to look into Boys and Girls Club building.

Mr. Small will bring the warehouse project forward as a future discussion topic.

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

Amend to update the backup calendar, no other changes were made.

GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT:

Arthur Hodge stressed the importance of open communication and keeping everyone informed across the district. He called for recognizing student achievements and ensuring support for students in need. Using a military analogy for district roles, he emphasized the community's responsibility to stay informed and improve the system for young people, who require attention and support, noting that resources, sometimes personal, are often needed.

Tonopah High English teacher Nicholas Fischer reported an AI cheating epidemic affecting writing and math, citing student misuse of class time and unreliable detection tools. He urged the district to provide teacher training and penalize students for AI use like other cheating to restore academic integrity.

ADJOURNMENT:

8:30 pm

By _____

Larry Small, Clerk

