



# AMERICAN CIVITAS

Board: Douglas County, Nevada School Board

Date: February 26, 2026

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Item	Title	Summary	Outcome
1	Call to Order	Meeting called to order; agenda adopted;	Passed (unanimous)
2	Student Report	High school updates: ACT testing, sports (ski, swim, wrestling), events (dance, Mr. DHS)	For information only
3	Board Reports	Presentation Only	For information only
4	Consent Items	Approval of minutes, vouchers (\$35K Ford Maverick queried), budget adjustments, personnel	Passed (unanimous)
5	Appointment of Trustee	Dave Brady Appointed	Passed (4:1)
6	Agenda Item 13: Rooftop Unit Contract	HVAC bid review (\$1.9M low); delayed for consolidation review	No vote (postponed)
7	Staff Recognition: Life Changer Award	Melissa Bays nominated; \$20K for sensory room if won	For information only
8	Agenda Item 7: Budget Resolutions	Resolutions 26-01/02/03: shifts (\$2.5M to CIP), deficit to \$2M, savings (\$880K vacancies)	All passed (unanimous)
9	Agenda Item 8: Appraisals	Office (\$1.27M-\$1.28M), parcel (\$300K-\$560K); variances on repairs/master plan	Passed (unanimous)
10	Agenda Item 9: Second Appraisal	DOE-appointed appraisal aligned on building, divergent on parcel	Passed (unanimous)
11	Agenda Item 10: Surplus Resolution	Surplus declaration discussed; pursue interlocal with Minden first	No vote (inaction)
12	Agenda Item 17: Aspire Presentation	Mission, metrics (enrollment ~100, graduates 23, attendance +2%), initiatives (JAG, PBIS, pathways)	For information only
13	Closed Session	Negotiations discussion (NRS)	For discussion only
14	Agenda Item 14: Board Governance Handbook	Revisions (purpose statement, oaths, bylaws integration, duties); adopted	Passed (unanimous)
15	Agenda Item 15: 2026-2027 Calendar	Draft mirrors current; approved for stability amid changes	Passed (unanimous)

Item	Title	Summary	Outcome
16	Agenda Item 16: Bullying Update	Additions (race discrimination, screener); reports (12-26 quarterly, decreasing)	For information only
17	Agenda Item 18: Staffing Ratios	Guidelines: ratios (e.g., elem 24-26:1), changes (aides 30:1, monitors); discretion noted	For information only
18	Informational Items	Student/board/superintendent reports	For information only
19	Public Comment (Various)	Calendar stability, pre-break semester end (delay changes); budget depth needed	For information only
20	Adjournment	Meeting adjourned	N/A

## Executive Summary

The Douglas County School District Board of Trustees convened for a regular meeting, addressing a range of operational, fiscal, and governance matters amid ongoing budgetary challenges and community input. Key actions included the appointment of Dave Brady as District Seven Trustee following a public interview and unanimous vote (5-1), approval of the 2026-2027 school calendar mirroring the current year for stability during consolidation transitions, and adoption of three budget resolutions (26-01, 26-02, 26-03) augmenting funds and shifting \$2.5 million in general fund expenditures to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), reducing the projected deficit from \$4.5 million to \$2 million. Appraisals for the district office building and adjacent parcel were accepted, valuing them at approximately \$1.28 million and \$300,000 respectively (with variances due to master plan interpretations), though no action was taken on declaring them surplus, with consensus to explore an interlocal agreement with the Town of Minden first. Presentations covered Aspire Academy High School's progress (enrollment ~100, attendance improvements, new initiatives like JAG and adult pathways), bullying policy updates (new race discrimination inclusion and screener tool, decreasing trends with 12-26 quarterly reports), and 2026-2027 staffing ratios (adjustments for efficiency, e.g., elementary paraprofessionals at 30:1, no shared social worker). Consent items passed unanimously, including a queried \$35,000 Ford Maverick purchase (details forthcoming). The student report highlighted ACT testing, sports achievements, and upcoming events like Mr. DHS. Public comments focused on pay cut concerns from a recent article, historical preservation of the district office, and calendar stability. No action on rooftop HVAC contract (item 13) due to consolidation uncertainties. The board advanced governance by adopting the handbook with revisions (e.g., integrating bylaws, legislative representative duties). Themes included fiscal prudence, student-centered decisions, and preserving community trust amid changes like potential consolidation and interfund loans from building sales to address deficits.

## Highlights

- **Fiscal and Budgetary Actions:** Budget augmentations captured \$880,000 in savings from unfilled positions and shifted expenses to CIP via debt service transfers (\$2.8 million), emphasizing one-time measures with annual reevaluation needed for sustainability. Interfund loan exploration from building sales could temporarily cover the \$2 million deficit (repayable within one year).
- **Trustee Appointment and Governance:** Dave Brady's appointment filled District Seven; handbook revisions promoted balanced governance, with bylaws integration for simplicity and additions like dual oaths of office and appointee residency preferences.
- **School and Student Updates:** Aspire reported 8 early 2026 graduates (15 more expected), 2% attendance increase, and new programs like JAG and SOS mentoring. Student report noted ACT testing, wrestling successes (e.g., Mira Klein runner-up), and Mr. DHS fundraiser (March 27, theme "Douglas Goes D1"). Calendar approval maintained status quo for 2026-2027, with future revisions eyed for semester alignment before winter break.

- **Operational Guidelines:** Staffing ratios adjusted for efficiency (e.g., elementary aides 30:1, no social worker; middle/high campus monitors replace paras); lake schools half-time AP for under 500 students; Aspire reduced secretary support.
- **Appraisals and Property:** Dual appraisals accepted; public urged sale to Town of Minden for historic preservation (1918 building, Dangberg ties); no surplus declaration, favoring interlocal over bidding for certainty and community alignment.

### **Adoption of the Agenda, Minutes, and Vouchers**

The DCSD Board adopted a flexible agenda, approved previous minutes, consent Items and regular run vouchers.

Items 11 and 12 were removed from the agenda. Item 12 was not a viable legal option. Item 11 was not ready for review.

**Public Comment ( Non-Agenda Items):** Four district staff members and negotiators voiced concerns prompted by a Record Courier article detailing projected 4% pay cuts from a Nevada Department of Taxation meeting, expected to save one million dollars this year and two million next, effective January 2026, plus an additional PERS contribution totaling over 5.6% reductions. Speakers expressed shock at learning this through media rather than district channels, highlighting severe impacts on personal finances, morale, retention, and student stability, with comparisons to higher-paying neighboring districts and calls for alternative budget solutions. They emphasized the need for contextual accuracy in financial communications, adherence to negotiation confidentiality to prevent misinformation and panic, and recognition of unaccounted savings from recent position eliminations exceeding three point six million dollars, while clarifying that no final decisions have been made as negotiations continue.

### **Presentation on Aspire Academy High School**

Aspire Academy High School's mission is to provide students with a sense of belonging to a larger community, enable them to achieve success and celebrate accomplishments with their school family, and promote service to others. The vision is for all students to pursue integrity, responsibility, and education. Current enrollment is approximately one hundred students, with recent fluctuations including four new additions and one departure. The school has recorded eight early graduations in the 2026 academic year, with fifteen more expected by June. Attendance rates improved by nearly two percent year-over-year in the first semester through a school-wide wildly important goal focused on attendance, involving bi-monthly progress monitoring and transparent scoreboards. Staff developed individual scoreboards to support this goal. Data analysis of failure rates, referrals, and attendance by the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team informed decisions, leading to a second-semester strategy with a new scoreboard incentivizing perfect attendance toward a milestone where the principal receives a pie to the face. Perfect attendance increased from thirty-six students in the first week to fifty in the following week. To address referrals, the school partnered with Partnership Douglas to assign Millennium courses for restorative support, culminating in certificates and individual progress meetings. In collaboration with the district office, a revised midyear master schedule introduced credit-bearing support elective courses during the school day for students

needing assistance in English or mathematics. The school emphasizes posing precise questions to identify root causes for improving attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism.

Key initiatives include the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program, which prepares students for job interviews, self-discovery, first impressions, tie-tying, job skills, public speaking, and post-graduation life, with field trips and one-year follow-up support for needs such as college books or housing. JAG is open to all students. A robust Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program allows students to earn points for rewards like attending educational games, water bottles, Chromebook chargers, personalized sweatshirts, or trips, reinforcing behavioral expectations of integrity, responsibility, and education. Points are awarded with specific feedback and positive comments logged in the system. The school aims to improve its Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) score through district coaching and MTSS team collaboration. Service is a core pillar, requiring students to complete at least five hours per semester and a related project, with staff modeling service and inviting external speakers. Partnerships with the Elks Club enable Student of the Month recognitions. The annual holiday store, supported by community donations via QR code and Amazon, allows students to use PBIS points to purchase family gifts, with students assisting in organization and setup. Leadership students partnered with Minden Elementary School for a fall festival featuring games and activities. ACT preparation was prioritized using Building Improvement Funds to administer Pre-ACT 8/9 and Pre-ACT tests for eligible students, providing detailed reports on responses, correct answers, and career suggestions. Two students earned Early Scholar Awards. A donation supports the SOS mentoring program, offering weekend skiing and snowboarding with mentorship. The year's theme, "Hope Rising," aligns with goals to increase attendance, improve MTSS TFI scores, and enhance student achievement, celebrated through events like hot cocoa gatherings for perfect attendance and promotional imagery for goal achievements.

The school collaborates with the state to adapt the School Performance Framework for alternative schools. An approved adult pathway for seventeen- and eighteen-year-old severely credit-deficient students will offer support toward HiSET or adult diplomas, with high HiSET scores potentially waiving credits. This includes counselor audits, a built-in support class, a hybrid after-school work experience or internship, and two Edmentum courses per quarter for accelerated credit recovery. Challenges include chronic absenteeism linked to mental health, trauma, or substance use disorders, with a proposed solution of grant-funded full-time mental health or social worker support. Limited staff hinders offering extensive Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Physical Education (PE) courses, though one PE section serves fifteen students at the recreation center. Next year, a Big Picture Learning work-based internship will be implemented for high school students, with virtual site visits planned. Middle school students will access the Maple

Woodshop CTE course. A state-approved hybrid bell schedule provides flexibility, potentially allowing students to attend PE or CTE classes at Douglas High School.

Student reflections emphasized Aspire's impact: One student noted growth through focused education and social integration, praising staff efforts to foster belonging and personal agency. Another highlighted the familial atmosphere, immediate welcome, lack of isolation, and ready support from teachers and peers. A third described feeling at home despite health issues preventing traditional school attendance, valuing supportive connections with staff, teachers, and students. A fourth conveyed a sense of belonging and safety, with invested staff ensuring no student is considered irredeemable and facilitating one-on-one interactions.

#### **Trustee Comments:**

- **Trustee Zinke:** Inquired about limited PE courses, referencing past use of the recreation center and seeking details on current offerings.
- **Trustee Gneiting:** Asked for clarification on the spring support classes, questioning if they involve mentoring or tutoring-style help.
- **Trustee Jackson:** Requested explanation of the adult pathway program, including its relation to HiSET preparation and overall structure.

**Public Comment:** None taken.

**Vote:** None taken.

#### **Staff Recognition: Nomination for Life Changer Award**

##### **Full Description**

Miss Delaney presented recognition for Melissa Bays, a specialized academic instructor at Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School, nominated by colleague Cliff Reader for the Life Changer Award. Ms. Bays supports students with varied learning needs, emphasizing academic instruction alongside life skills, self-advocacy, independence, and relationship building. Her classroom environment encourages students to develop confidence, voice their needs, and acquire competencies for post-middle school success. As an advocate for inclusive education, she integrates students into general education classes, electives, clubs, and school events, collaborating with core and elective teachers to promote full participation and autonomy. She celebrates student achievements and fosters connections on campus and in the community, partnering with families, caregivers, and organizations to prepare students for fulfilling futures. If awarded the \$20,000 prize, Ms. Bays intends to establish a sensory room at the school, featuring soft lighting, calming sounds, and comfortable seating to assist students in managing anxiety, regulating emotions, reducing stress, and re-engaging in learning. Her contributions have gained public attention, including a feature

on KOLO 8 News Now and an appearance with a student on the "We Can Do Epic Things" podcast, showcasing her role in cultivating meaningful bonds and inspiring self-assurance. Ms. Bays exemplifies transformative education through her commitment to inclusion, advocacy, and empowerment, ensuring students feel valued and capable.

**Trustee Comments:** None received

**Public Comment:** None taken.

**Vote:** None taken.

### **Consideration of Contract for Rooftop Unit Replacement Project**

The district sought board approval for a contract with Aqua Engineering Systems for the replacement of rooftop HVAC units at CC Meneley and Jacks Valley Elementary Schools, a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project planned for over seven years and included in the five-year CIP. The existing units, over twenty-five years old, have been maintained beyond expectations, but failure would disrupt school operations, making proactive replacement essential before catastrophic breakdown. Two bids were received, with Aqua Engineering Systems submitting the low bid of approximately 1.9 million dollars, compared to the second bid of two point four million dollars. Aqua Engineering Systems has established a strong regional presence in Northern Nevada, performing district work for five to six years, which has enabled competitive pricing due to their scale. The district's initial estimate was one point eight million dollars per school. The bid structure included a base bid for CC Meneley and added alternates for Jacks Valley, allowing flexibility to fit within budget constraints. Favorable pricing permitted inclusion of both the base bid and all alternates, requiring only minimal additional funding to complete the entire project this year rather than phasing it over two years, which would incur extra overhead costs. The project involves structural reinforcements, new curbing, and other ancillary work beyond simple unit replacement, with completion targeted by August 15, prior to school start. Approval was recommended for Aqua Engineering Systems. Discussions addressed potential impacts from upcoming decisions on school consolidation, particularly regarding CC Meneley's future use, with concerns about expending funds on a facility that might be repurposed or closed. CIP funds are restricted to capital projects and cannot be reallocated to general fund needs, though recent shifts of 1.7 million dollars in general fund expenditures to CIP have helped mitigate deficits. The project remains budgeted within CIP, supplemented by transfers from debt service funds, which maintain a substantial balance due to ongoing county tax contributions. Bids were opened on February tenth and expire after thirty days, aligning with the March 12 special meeting date, providing a four-day cushion. Delaying approval risks bid expiration, potential material price increases, or contractor withdrawal, though no exclusions for pricing fluctuations or tariffs are in the contract, locking in the proposed costs. The base bid prioritizes CC Meneley due to higher maintenance needs at the time of bidding, with Jacks Valley as alternates for economic

efficiency in procurement and installation of eight units collectively. Contract terms are negotiable post-award, including schedule adjustments for school calendar changes, potentially at additional cost. Installation per school requires two to three weeks, involving unit removal, structural work, and curbing, precluding completion during short breaks without premium costs for accelerated timelines.

### **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Zinke:** Expressed concern over approving expenditures for CC Meneley amid uncertainty from impending consolidation decisions, suggesting postponement until after the March twelfth special meeting or via a separate meeting to avoid potential misalignment with facility repurposing. Noted risks of unit failure but prioritized fiscal prudence, questioning if a two-week delay would impact the August fifteenth completion and proposing a one-day bid extension. Advocated rescheduling the special meeting earlier to stay within the thirty-day bid expiration while gaining clarity on facility use.
- **Trustee Jansen:** Inquired if funds are already allocated for the project and whether it affects other budgets, and whether the facility would require repairs even if closed, sold, or repurposed for pre-K or district office use to maintain value or functionality.
- **Trustee Gneiting:** Questioned if sufficient CIP funds remain for the project after transferring expenditures from the general fund, seeking confirmation on budget adequacy.
- **Trustee Miller:** Asked about the bid opening date (February tenth) and whether bids could expire before the March twelfth meeting, noting the thirtieth day falls on that date and potential risks of nighttime meeting timing.
- **Ms. Jackson:** Sought clarification on the base bid (CC Meneley) and added alternates (Jacks Valley), confirming both schools receive identical four-unit replacements. Questioned if priorities could be switched to favor Jacks Valley if CC Meneley's future is uncertain, and how school start date changes might affect the contract. Inquired about installation duration and feasibility of completing during breaks. Commented that approval hinges on confirmed ongoing use of CC Meneley, as non-educational buyers might not require the upgrades.
- **Trustee Wagstaff:** Asked how long installation takes per school and if it could be scheduled during a break to minimize disruption.

**Public Comment:** Brian Patrick advocated for prompt approval of the contract, highlighting the favorable bid pricing as a "sweetheart deal" that should not be jeopardized by a thirty-day delay or bid extension requests, which could lead to increased costs or deal collapse if material prices rise. He stressed that deferring repairs might necessitate rebidding at

inflated rates, especially if the property is later sold and requires fixes to maximize value, given the funds are already designated and ready.

**Vote:** Vote unanimous to table item to next DCSD board meeting.

### **Interview and Appointment of District Seven Trustee**

The board conducted an interview with Dave Brady, the applicant for the vacant District Seven trustee position, posing three prepared questions. In response to the first multipart question regarding his residency, involvement with the Douglas County School District (DCSD), and the district's strengths, Mr. Brady stated he has resided in the district for forty years. His engagement began with volunteering in his daughter's kindergarten classroom, continuing through her elementary years, delivering lunches in middle school, and shared lunches in high school until her graduation. In 1995, he successfully ran for a board vacancy, serving ten years, including two as president, without any open meeting law violations, resigning only upon relocating outside the district boundaries. He described the district's appeal as a "Goldilocks effect"—neither too large like Clark County nor too small like Eureka County—fostering a strong community sense. During his tenure, weekly site visits highlighted exceptional student-teacher and administrative relationships, though he noted a current lack of that positive atmosphere. For the second question on his motivation and skills, Mr. Brady cited his grandson's enrollment as primary incentive, alongside his critical thinking abilities, experience as a chief negotiator, thirty-eight years in the financial industry with strong numerical proficiency, and problem-solving expertise, offering seasoned perspective to the board. Addressing the third question on the district's foremost student challenge, he identified the ongoing fiscal and decision-making difficulties, exacerbated by legislative inaction despite declining enrollment and district cost-cutting efforts. He criticized the legislature's failure to adjust metrics like hold harmless provisions or update the Nevada Cost of Education Index (NCEI) biennially, impacting funding and creating uncertainty that permeates from legislative levels to classrooms and homes, evident in parental and student anxiety at town halls, particularly at CC Meneley. He advocated for external advocacy to alert legislators, positioning Douglas County as a "canary in the coal mine" amid broader statewide issues, and urged collective action among superintendents and boards to seek assistance, noting similar struggles in Clark County and at Eagle Valley Middle School.

### **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Jansen:** Recalled Mr. Brady's previous unawareness of mandatory reporting requirements for volunteers and board members, expressed surprise at this given his experience, and disliked his characterization of the board as paralyzed in decision-making, viewing it as negative. Noted personal unkindness but refrained from further elaboration.

- **Trustee Jackson:** Highlighted Mr. Brady's prior board service and deep district involvement, enabling him to contribute immediately without training, drawing parallels to her own onboarding. Emphasized his financial background as valuable for addressing numerical challenges.
- **Trustee Wagstaff:** Agreed with emphasis on Mr. Brady's past board experience, understanding of open meeting laws and public records, deeming it crucial amid current complexities.
- **Trustee Zinke:** Defended Mr. Brady's candid remarks as honest, stressing the need for open debate on the board to resolve issues, even amid disagreements. Praised his resume and contributions to the county over twenty years, suggesting he would stand out among multiple applicants, and expressed concern over low application numbers possibly reflecting on the board.
- **Trustee Gneiting:** Commended Mr. Brady's long-term involvement starting from kindergarten volunteering, noting his multifaceted district experience and wealth of knowledge as assets.

### **Public Comment**

A resident who has known Mr. Brady since the early 2000s from a strategic planning meeting, praised his inclusivity, seriousness in considering input, and skills including time availability, willingness, heart, and resilience against undue influence. Highlighted his respectfulness, honesty, thoughtfulness, and superb financial background as essential for fostering board conversations and ensuring voices are heard.

Brian Patrick, familiar with Mr. Brady for many years through shared involvement like PTSO at Jacks Valley and debates on multi-track scheduling, affirmed his deep care for the district, Jacks Valley, and Douglas County. Described him as forceful, passionate, and essential for the board's composition.

Carl Schnuck, a seventeen-year resident and former VP of Finance at Sony with thirty-three years' experience chairing or co-chairing about forty bankruptcies, endorsed Mr. Brady as a pragmatic crisis manager skilled in numbers and decisive action. Shared examples from bankruptcies like Tower Records (resolved in thirty-six days) and Warehouse Records (involuntary filing leading to CEO dismissal), emphasizing the need for separating emotions from necessary decisions in the district's fiscal crisis, and offered his own assistance.

Marty Swisher, a resident who has known Mr. Brady personally and professionally for over twenty-two years as a former teacher and administrator during Mr. Brady's prior board tenure, concurred with prior comments. Noted mutual respect despite occasional disagreements, and lauded his high-level community involvement with the chamber of commerce, as a reserve deputy sheriff, and with the suicide prevention network,

underscoring his unquestionable character, integrity, and potential contributions during his interim term.

**Vote:** Vote passed (4:1; Jansen opposing) to appoint Dave Brady as Trustee.

### **Resolution to Approve Second Amendment and Augmented and Amended Budget for the 2025-2026 School Year**

The board considered three resolutions to approve the second amendment and augmented and amended budget for the 2025-2026 school year, incorporating revisions for certified employees, audited fund balance carry forwards, and augmentations to specific funds. Ms. Justice presented, noting the atypical February timing to identify savings as requested by the Department of Taxation, emphasizing that no unresolved or negotiated items are included. The resolutions enable transfers from the debt service fund to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to cover eligible expenditures previously in the general fund, such as district-wide software, textbooks, and major maintenance, while buses were already shifted in December. Approximately 2.5 million dollars in general fund savings were identified and redirected to CIP, including \$880,000 from unfilled vacant positions and staff departures without widespread job losses. The CIP is primarily funded by Gross Sales Tax (GST) from motor vehicle purchases and residential building permit taxes (\$1,600 per permit), with renewal required in 2028. Debt service, comprising principal and interest payments, receives \$0.10 per dollar in ad valorem taxes (with \$0.75 cents going to the state for redistribution), maintaining a robust balance exceeding the board's fifty percent policy threshold, allowing a 2.8 million dollar transfer to CIP. This adjustment reduces the general fund projected deficit from 4.5 million dollars to 2 million dollars, representing actual savings and shifts. Federal funds reflect grant approvals and are a moving target, with reductions anticipated as COVID-related funds like ESSER expire. The process requires annual CIP reevaluation in May as part of the five-year plan, cautioning that such transfers are not indefinitely sustainable without restructuring the CIP to accommodate ongoing expenditures, based on annual debt service revenue. Future options like building sales would direct proceeds to the building and sites fund within CIP. The resolutions address general fund, other funds, and debt service separately, with each needing individual approval.

### **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Wagstaff:** Inquired about CIP funding sources and confirmed understanding that the resolutions capture unfulfilled budgeted items like vacant positions and shift eligible expenses to CIP.
- **Trustee Brady:** Asked about debt service components and whether the recognized savings represent one-time non-recurring funds.

- **Trustee Jackson:** Questioned the impact on the projected deficit, confirming the reduction to two million dollars.
- **Ms. Jackson:** Sought clarification on implications for the five-year CIP, noting the need for caution in capital projects to ensure funds for shifted expenses, and tied it to prior discussions on delaying CC Meneley expenditures.
- **Trustee Zinke:** Inquired about salary savings in Resolution 26-02, confirming they stem from already implemented reductions or unfilled positions, not future projections, and noted federal fund variances due to accounting and expiring grants.
- **Trustee Gneiting:** Questioned deficit projections.

**Public Comment:** None received.

**Vote:** Vote on Resolution 26-01, Resolution 26-02, and Resolution 26-03 passed unanimously.

### **Acceptance of Appraisals for District Office Building and Adjacent Parcel**

The board reviewed two independent appraisals for the district office building and an adjacent vacant parcel, currently utilized as a grassy field and historically as a dog park. The appraiser explained the variances between the evaluations. For the office building, the primary discrepancy was a \$150,000 deduction applied by one appraiser (CR Evaluation) for ongoing bat infestation remediation and seismic repairs, which the presenting appraiser omitted, reasoning that the work is nearing completion and funded by insurance, resulting in aligned values of \$1,280,000 and \$1,270,000, respectively. The vacant parcel showed greater divergence, with values at \$560,000 and \$300,000, attributed to differing interpretations of the master plan designation as community facilities, precluding single-family residential development. The presenting appraiser noted a 1996 zoning oversight that should have aligned it with SFR-8000 (single-family residential, 80,000 square foot lots), but deemed a master plan amendment speculative and challenging due to potential community opposition in Minden. Consequently, comparables were selected based on public facilities use rather than residential, while the other appraisal relied on nearby residential sales under a different master plan. Aggregate values differed by approximately \$100,000, with the other appraisal higher overall. The appraiser recommended packaging the properties together for sale, listing above appraised values to allow negotiation flexibility, anticipating a limited but viable market, potentially including municipalities or local investors with community passion, given the building's historic significance (built in 1918, plaque dated 1925, listed on the National Register of Historic Places).

### **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Brady:** Inquired about the relationship between highest and best use and zoning, seeking clarification on pricing impacts from a master plan modification.

Confirmed the vacant parcel's current use as a dog park. Expressed concern over potential residential development yielding four units if rezoned, advocating for a deal with the Town of Minden to retain it as open space.

- **Trustee Zinke:** Questioned comparable selections, noting variances in price per square foot between a smaller 6,000 square-foot property at \$180,000 per square foot and a larger 20,000 square-foot building at \$120,000, suggesting a potential averaged or ratio-based adjustment for the district's ten-thousand-square-foot equivalent.
- **Trustee Wagstaff:** Questioned if buyers must conduct their own appraisals, learning public entities are capped at appraised values while private developers may exceed them, potentially via bidding. Inquired about historic building maintenance requirements, confirming buyers' responsibility for due diligence on restrictions, with no district prohibition on sale but disclosure obligations.

### **Public Comment**

During the combined public comment for items eight and nine, Residents voiced frustration over prior board mismanagement, including excessive legal expenditures, urging a sale to the Town of Minden to preserve the property's historical significance tied to the Dangberg family since 1909, maintain neighborhood integrity, and generate one-time capital funds, while complying with NRS 393.240 requiring sales at or above appraised values (exempting intergovernmental transfers).

**Vote:** Vote unanimous to accept the appraisals.

### **Acceptance of Second Appraisal for District Office Building and Adjacent Parcel**

Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), the district appointed one appraiser, while the Nevada Department of Education appointed a second, Rob Worthington, to evaluate the district office building and adjacent vacant parcel (combined as two Assessor's Parcel Numbers or APNs in one appraisal report). Mr. Worthington presented remotely, noting the appraisals aligned closely on the improved property's value, deeming it reasonable given the small market and limited comparables. He described his report as concise due to market constraints, offering to address questions but receiving none from the board at that time.

**Trustee Comments:** None received.

**Public Comment:** None received.

**Vote:** Vote unanimous to approve appraisers.

## Surplus of Real Property Resolution

The board considered a resolution to declare the district office building and adjacent vacant parcel as surplus real property, initiating a public listing and open bidding process for sale. Legal counsel clarified two sale options: public bidding, allowing any party to submit offers potentially leading to a bidding war for maximum value, or an interlocal agreement for direct negotiation with a government entity like the Town of Minden at a negotiated price not exceeding appraisals, bypassing public competition. The item agendaized only the public bidding path; pursuing interlocal would require tabling or denying this resolution and scheduling a future item for negotiation authorization. Board consensus leaned toward interlocal, prioritizing historical preservation, community intent (original deeds from 1909 and 1945 with reversionary clauses, 1981 quitclaim), neighborhood integrity, and professional courtesy to the Town of Minden, with fallback to public bidding if negotiations fail. Concerns included potential deed restrictions (under review for viability or abandonment), master plan amendments for residential rezoning facing opposition, and private buyers' contingencies reducing net proceeds through repair demands (e.g., ADA compliance, seismic retrofits).

### Trustee Comments

- **Trustee Miller:** Advocated for an interlocal agreement over open bidding to better serve the Town of Minden.
- **Trustee Jansen:** Supported public auction to maximize return.
- **Trustee Gneiting:** Expressed preference for interlocal to preserve historical integrity aligned with original community intent, avoiding parceling for homes.
- **Trustee Brady:** Supported interlocal as professional courtesy to the Town of Minden, with open bidding as fallback.
- **Trustee Zinke:** Favored interlocal for benefits in inspections, repairs (e.g., pest removal, ADA), and liability reduction (dog park), noting private buyers' demands; requested future agenda item for interlocal agreement.

**Public Comment:** Wesley Peters, Assistant Director of Ed Services and former kindergarten student at the site, lamented the situation as unfortunate, questioning sale necessity since proceeds fund capital improvements, not general fund deficits or position savings. Suggested retaining for district office reuse to maximize CC Meneley consolidation savings (estimated \$938,000 dollars unrealized with partial pre-K/office occupancy requiring staff, administrator for IEPs, kitchen, extended custodial hours), noting perception of financial relief is misleading.

Adrian Sawyer understood sale desire but urged careful buyer selection for historic preservation, anticipating opposition from ranching families and old-timers to alterations;

noted master plan changes for the adjacent parcel would face neighborhood resistance; questioned if 1.6 million dollars in one-time capital funds (covering recent additions for only one to two years) justifies the sale.

**Vote:** No motion was made; the board took no action on the resolution, effectively denying it for now, with flexibility to revisit.

### **2026-2027 School Calendar**

Ashley Mitchell presented the proposed 2026-2027 school calendar, noting it was the third discussion and that this was the third meeting addressing the topic. A community survey conducted earlier showed overwhelming support for maintaining breaks, ending first semester before winter break, and preserving October break without starting significantly earlier in August. Multiple drafts were developed following board requests in December, but the requested sixth draft (imbalanced semesters ending at winter break, mid-August start, and October break retained) failed to preserve the required seven thousand two hundred minutes per course for high school credit under state guidelines. Nevada Department of Education confirmation required balanced semesters, with each providing at least three thousand six hundred minutes of seat time per course; the draft left only three thousand seven hundred sixty-three minutes, insufficient for Douglas High School students to adjust schedules, enroll late, or accommodate partial enrollees and homeschooled beyond one class period. Other drafts aligning more closely with survey results and the current calendar were viable. The presented draft mirrored the current school year exactly, maintaining one hundred eighty-two certified staff work days (including three days under memorandum of understanding), PLC and PD placement, start and end dates, and all breaks. Snow makeup days remained under negotiation with DCP&A. January PD days following winter break showed no significant impact on chronic absenteeism. The board discussed options for ending first semester before Christmas (as practiced in Washoe County and prior Douglas calendars), including starting one week earlier, eliminating select long weekends or parent-teacher conferences, adjusting period lengths at Douglas High School, or suspending lake-valley alignment policies, while weighing impacts on teacher contracts, family planning, consolidation changes, and student mental well-being. Draft six was confirmed non-viable without schedule adjustments, but earlier viable drafts could be revisited. The board ultimately approved the presented draft mirroring the current year for stability amid other district changes, with plans to workshop future calendars (including 2027-2028) in May for structural revisions such as semester alignment. The board then entered closed session to discuss negotiations and returned, confirming the topic.

### **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Miller:** Inquired about snow makeup days' effect on start or end dates given the current MOU and whether calendar decisions impacted negotiations; emphasized the importance of ending first semester before Christmas for scholarship opportunities and student performance, supporting a one-week earlier start while preserving breaks and October break; advocated adopting the presented draft for the upcoming year and beginning work on 2027-2028 changes in May.
- **Trustee Zinke:** Stressed benefits of ending first semester before Christmas for student performance, retention of material, reduced cramming, earlier June release, and alignment with most districts (including Washoe County's eighty-three/ninety-seven day split and similar breaks); questioned the non-viability perception given other districts' success and past Douglas calendars; supported revisiting drafts or reaching out to Washoe for details on period lengths; ultimately agreed to approve the current draft for this year while planning structural changes for future years to allow time for negotiations and logistics.
- **Trustee Wagstaff:** Supported ending the semester before Christmas for earlier grades/transcripts benefiting college and scholarship applications; agreed to approve the presented draft for stability and teacher morale while planning future revisions.
- **Trustee Jackson:** Clarified that starting one week earlier still required adjustments for sufficient schedule-change time; supported approving the current draft this year and pursuing changes for 2027-2028.
- **Trustee Brady:** Inquired about student perspectives on ending the semester before Christmas; supported pursuing the change for future years while approving the presented draft now.
- **Superintendent Alvarado:** Recommended approving the presented draft for stability and beginning work on 2027-2028 changes, noting the December board statement on maintaining start/end dates.

**Public Comment:** Brian Patrick urged the board to make a decision on the calendar rather than continuing discussions, noting the public survey favored maintaining the status quo and criticizing overall indecision across agenda items amid financial pressures.

Lindsay Wharton, parent of three students (elementary, middle, and high school), supported ending the semester before Christmas, sharing that her sophomore daughter experienced lost instructional time over the recent break with minimal new material; favored additional minutes or earlier start if needed and was open to polling high school students.

Mr. Swisher, long-time resident, recalled the district previously shifting to end semesters before Christmas (a positive change) before reverting; emphasized significant benefits for

students and urged taking time to implement correctly rather than rushing, recommending one more year on the current calendar to avoid pressure-driven errors.

Ashley Nilssen, staff member and parent, supported ending the semester before Christmas but urged adopting the presented draft immediately for planning stability, noting many families and staff had already made summer travel arrangements based on December assurances.

Miss Peters, speaking from an educator perspective after visiting schools, highlighted teacher anxiety and low morale amid unknowns; urged approving the presented draft as a “win” for staff to rebuild trust and support, arguing against further changes this year given consolidation and potential pay issues.

Adrian Sawyer, parent of three students including two high schoolers, supported ending the semester before Christmas but agreed the timing was poor due to existing plans and December assurances; recommended adopting the current draft and carefully planning future changes to avoid appearing unorganized.

Jeremy Hite, teacher and parent, suggested eliminating parent-teacher conference or in-service days in the first semester (replaceable via modern communication tools like Parent Square or administrator coverage) to gain needed minutes without altering start dates, enabling earlier finals and better support for seniors' scholarships.

Maxine Cahill expressed frustration that extensive time was spent discussing the calendar compared to the budget, questioning the lack of deeper public explanation on deficit reductions and fund transfers.

**Vote:** Vote unanimous to approve the 2026-2027 School Calendar as presented.

Author Note: DCSD staff made promises to families regarding the final calendar before the Board made any decision regarding the multiple drafts being reviewed. One is left to wonder who is in charge – the Board or staff?

### **Bullying Policy Update and Reporting Requirements**

Mr. Brown provided an update on the district’s bullying policy and related legal requirements. Recent legislative changes added discrimination based on race to the definition of bullying and incorporated a new screener tool created under AB 48. The screener allows administrators to conduct preliminary fact-finding on a reported incident and determine whether it meets the legal threshold for bullying (severe and willful act, pervasive, repeated, and involving an imbalance of power). If the screener indicates the situation is a mutual conflict rather than bullying, the matter can be addressed through standard discipline without triggering the full bullying investigation, timelines, and reporting obligations. All board members were reminded of their statutory duty: any allegation of

bullying received from a parent, community member, or other source must be reported within twenty-four hours to Superintendent Alvarado or Mr. Brown so an investigation can begin immediately. Once reported, the board member's obligation is fulfilled and staff handles the remainder of the process. Quarterly bullying incident reports will continue to be presented to the board, including the number of reports received, whether they were founded or unfounded, and any resulting suspensions. The most recent quarter showed 26 reported incidents (noting that a single event may generate multiple reports). Mr. Brown stated that many reports, particularly at the elementary level, are ultimately unfounded once the distinction between bullying and conflict is explained, and that counselor-led instruction on the topic has contributed to a decreasing trend in actual bullying reports year over year. The board clarified that the 26-incident figure referenced in a prior Whittell meeting report did not indicate 26 separate events at that school alone.

### **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Brady:** Asked how commonplace bullying reports are and requested trend data year over year.

**Public Comment:** None taken.

**Vote:** None taken.

### **Presentation of 2026-2027 Staffing Ratios and Operational Guidelines**

Miss Dwyer presented the proposed staffing ratios and operational guidelines for the 2026-2027 school year, developed in compliance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 388.720, which permits districts in counties under 100,000 population to use alternative class size plans. The model aims to meet targets while acknowledging funding realities, with ratios calculated across grade levels district-wide rather than per school site. Class size reduction originated in 1989 to lower student-teacher ratios (initially 15:1), evolving over time; funding was once separate but since 2021 is incorporated into the pupil-centered funding formula, reducing dedicated resources. Changes from prior matrices were highlighted, including adjusted assistant principal allocations at elementary schools (half-time for 350 to 499 students, full-time over 450), teacher ratios (kindergarten 16:1 without using para support in calculations, first through third 24:1 exceeding NRS 22:1, fourth through fifth 26:1 exceeding NRS 25:1), secretary positions (secretary two per site, secretary one at seven hours for 200 to 399 students and eight hours over 400), paraprofessional support (30:1 from 25:1 for instructional/playground aides), and kindergarten aides reduced to four hours (point five FTE) from four and a half. Inclusive/special education caseloads remain fixed by NAC 388 (unchanged unless revised), with new 8:1 ratio for autism self-contained programs. Added allocations include social workers, psychologists, learning strategists (one per elementary, two for consolidated), Title I interventionists (for Title I schools or over 401 students), and ELL

specialists (25:1 with assistants, grant-funded). Nurse versus health aide assignments depend on geography, programs, and student medical needs (e.g., RNs at lake schools due to remoteness). Elementary schools will no longer have a shared social worker, relying on counselors for referrals. Middle schools: principal and assistant principal per site, 28:1 core ratios (excluding CTE/electives), aligned electives including culinary, PE, Spanish; campus safety monitors (seven hours) replace instructional paras at specified enrollment thresholds. Douglas High School (projected over 1,300 students): principal, athletic director, dean of students, 28:1 core ratios, secretary allocations (footnote for bookkeeper over 1,180), campus safety monitors replace ISS personnel. Lake schools (combined sites, three levels): half-time assistant principal for 1:499 students, ratios mirroring valley for K-6 but adjusted 26:1 for seven through twelve to enable required courses despite small size (thirteen to fourteen teachers total); no pre-K next year unless enrollment (IEPs) warrants, potentially staffing a teacher as cost-effective alternative to external placement or busing to Jacks Valley. Aspire: five to six teachers (added for seventh/eighth grade), principal oversees summer/extended year and Jacobson/Student Center transitions, reduced secretary (one secretary two, no secretary one for under one hundred students). Guidelines serve as baselines with superintendent discretion for adjustments based on needs (e.g., medical, athletics by participants/division).

### **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Gneiting:** Inquired if boundary adjustments for consolidated schools could drop enrollment below thresholds, affecting allocations (unlikely given student distribution in Ranchos area).
- **Trustee Jackson:** Sought explanation on deriving projected ratios (based on NRS baselines, district averages, and actuals/projections for class size reduction plan; used for staffing teachers, not cutting to meet targets).
- **Trustee Wagstaff:** Questioned paraprofessional presence in resource rooms for IE students (assigned per IEP needs, not program-wide; may support multiple classrooms).
- **Trustee Zinke:** Inquired if athletic director allocation (baseline for over one thousand students) could be eliminated below threshold (discretionary based on sports/participants; could shift to district-level role managing all schools if needed).

**Public Comment:** None taken.

**Vote:** None taken

## **Board Governance Handbook**

The superintendent presented the draft board governance handbook, created by consultant Dr. Tom Ellsbury as part of an approved contract that came in under budget. The handbook promotes a shift from detailed management to high-level oversight in a balanced governance model. A second phase, involving individual coaching through video review, is postponed until after the election to ensure board stability. Attachments included a clean draft and an overview of policy revisions. The board examined sections such as district strategic goals (proposing addition of the board purpose statement for use in grounding meetings; no new policies needed for goal revisions or the district performance plan, as these are either mandated by law or standard practice), board organization (aligned with NRS for members, terms, elections, and authority; no new policies required), board oversight requirements (annual review of school improvement plans as per existing policy, without board action), strategic goals (linked to the current plan, which ends next year; a new plan will be developed over six to nine months with input from students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the board, emphasizing student achievement and excluding operational details), measurable outcomes (goals adopted in October; a midyear report with metrics is in preparation), and outcome activities (board to be updated via reports, potentially on a quarterly basis in the future).

Board organization: Resignation procedures matched bylaw 040 (requiring written submission to the president, board acceptance at a meeting, and recognition of service); no changes made. Vacancy rules followed NRS (causes include death, resignation, loss of residency, or recall); no modifications possible. Replacement process prioritized appointing from the vacant district, with county-wide eligibility if no qualified candidates apply; revised language states "Appointees must reside within the vacant district seat and meet the legal requirements for school trustees," with service until the next election. The oath of office was updated to include versions for both appointed and elected trustees. Officer elections and terms aligned with bylaw 050; no alterations. Duties were revised by replacing "secretary" with "legislative representative" (tasks include monitoring legislation and reporting during meetings, transferred from president duties); vice president duties are implied (taking over in president's absence); removed vice president's role in ensuring compliance with Robert's Rules. Clerk duties were clarified, including drawing payment orders (now requiring clerk signature on vouchers alongside the business director). Individual trustee duties focused on data-driven, consensus-oriented governance. Appendix K (protocols for addressing governance failures) was accepted, despite some subjectivity. The board agreed to integrate bylaws into the handbook as a single procedural document for simplicity, rather than maintaining separate policies.

The handbook was largely edited real time in the meeting.

## **Trustee Comments**

- **Trustee Jansen:** Supported adding purpose statement; viewed goal revision as common sense (no policy needed); suggested general policy for periodic review/update of all policies/procedures; no policy for district performance plan as state-required.
- **Trustee Gneiting:** No policy for strategic goals (handbook sufficient); possible policy for district performance plan to affirm compliance.
- **Trustee Zinke:** Noted existing superintendent expectations/goals inherently revise annually; no policies needed as processes occur naturally, with public accountability via elections.
- **Trustee Jackson:** Inquired if policy exists requiring adherence to handbook (none currently); supported simplifying via integrated handbook over separate bylaws/policies.
- **Superintendent Alvarado:** Recommended embedding bylaws in handbook as procedural document for simplicity (per Dr. Ellsbury's Clark County example); reiterated strategic plan refresh next year with input, focusing on achievement; planned midyear/quarterly goal reports with metrics.

**Public Comment:** None taken.

**Vote:** Vote passed unanimous to adopt the revised handbook. A decision was made to schedule a special meeting to revise the remainder of the handbook as the process was not efficient.

### **Student Representative Report**

Student representative Jocelyn Groff delivered her second report, providing updates primarily from Whittell and Douglas High Schools. Both schools had recently completed ski week break and were readjusting to the regular schedule. Juniors at Douglas and Whittell took the ACT on Tuesday to support future scholarship and college applications. Whittell sports highlights included the ski team competing at state finals on Monday and a swim meet scheduled for the following day; an ADS Hawkins dance was held for middle and high school students, with the middle school event underway and the high school portion beginning at seven thirty. For Douglas, girls wrestling achievements at the 2026 NIAA Nevada Girls Wrestling Championships featured River Klein and Ella Kavanaugh leading the team, with Mira Klein finishing as state runner-up and Ella Kavanaugh earning a regional championship. An upcoming major event for Douglas was the annual Mr. DHS fundraiser on March twenty-seventh at the CVIC hall, with all proceeds benefiting the class of 2026 for graduation and grad night; the theme was “Douglas Goes D1.” Board members inquired about the event date and ticket pricing (approximately twenty dollars), noting its highly entertaining nature involving staff participation in humorous performances.

## **Board Reports**

**Trustee Jansen:** Attended Nevada Department of Education meetings on the Commission of Innovation and Excellence (focusing on funding, leadership, legislation, and shared learning across counties); visited Pau-Wa-Lu and Scarselli; listened to town halls.

**Trustee Miller:** Attended NASBE training on investments; met with McKinstry and keynote speaker for potential board training; participated in special meetings and town hall at the current site; attended Whittell/Douglas ski race; joined debt management meeting (brief due to snow); attended Tahoe Chamber meeting via Zoom (canceled in-person due to weather); completed PAC training; observed Department of Taxation meeting online

**Trustee Zinke:** Assisted with boys' golf tryouts; listened/attended town halls; served on Parks and Rec Advisory Committee (next meeting resumes with officer elections and spending priorities).

**Trustee Gneiting:** Reported on the health advisory committee (high January claims impacting budget, monitoring needed after last year's overruns); attended DPAC meeting at Pau-Wa-Lu and town halls at CC Meneley and Scarselli.

**Trustee Jackson:** Reported on the budget committee (no recent activity), completed initial PAC training; visited CC Meneley, Scarselli, Pau-Wa-Lu, CVMS, and DHS (meeting teachers, observing CLS, auto shop); served on debt management commission; attended town hall at CC Meneley and Scarselli.

**Trustee Wagstaff:** Attended Pool Pact training; attended NASB meeting; visited schools with consolidation perspective, praising staff dedication to students.

**Trustee Brady:** Attended the debt management commission.

## **Superintendent's Report**

The superintendent reported on donations: Christensen Automotive gave a \$1,000 welding machine to the DHS welding program; Goldie Kirby donated a 2012 Kia Forte valued at \$2,000 to the DHS automotive program; the Alexander Family Trust contributed \$1,000 to the DHS Skills USA program; Ron Morgan donated a Miller Matic 200 welding machine valued at \$1,000 to DHS welding; Raymond City donated a 2014 Tesla S valued at \$5,000 to the DHS automotive program. Enrollment stands at 4,838 students, down 65 from the

same point last year. The superintendent attended a Washoe Tribe Education meeting with Megan Newman and Mrs. Spires, focusing on Native American student needs via the Panet program; follow-up outreach to Newman and Chairman Smokey addressed consolidation concerns, with a collaborative meeting planned within two weeks. Town halls (district-wide, CC Meneley, Scarselli) were facilitated with cabinet support, one prepared in under 24 hours. Testimony at the interim education committee highlighted pupil-centered funding plan issues like declining enrollment and homeschool impacts. Finalized the Department of Taxation report with Dr. Jensen, appreciating his assistance. Met with DCPA on February 9 to share the taxation executive summary, clarifying the menu of budget reduction options (not all pursued, e.g., no 10% compensation cuts intended). Negotiations began this week with DCPA (initial meeting), with information pending; upcoming sessions with bus drivers, classified staff, and confer groups aim to address the \$2 million deficit via interest-based processes. A DPAC meeting had low attendance; the final one may shift to virtual/Zoom for better participation. The February 25 Department of Taxation meeting avoided fiscal watch or receivership despite deficit spending (illegal under NRS); pleased with district efforts, they assigned a subcommittee (Paul Johnson, Martin Johnson, Tom Sazinski) for oversight, focusing on fund compliance. Weekly checks confirm no budget violations per audits. The superintendent encouraged growth over perfection, emphasizing kid-focused decisions.

## **Meeting Adjourned**