

Woodland Park School District Re-2

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Board Meeting – February 18, 2026

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Board President Keegan Barkley at 4:01 p.m. with the following members present: Robb Davidson, Kassidi Gilgenast, Laura Gordon, Carol Greenstreet, and Mrs. Barkley.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION Greenstreet, second Gordon, to approve the agenda.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

DISTRICT/MERIT SERVICES TRUE-UP FY25

Chief Financial Officer David Kuritar presented the District/Merit Services True-Up for FY25 (Addendum A). He explained that the first column reflects revenue allocated to Merit Academy, the second column reflects the amounts actually due, and the final column shows the resulting amounts due to or from each party. Mr. Kuritar noted that a portion of the charter administrative fee (\$236,356.97 of \$254,320.74) and the transportation cost (\$200,856.01) will receive a one-time adjustment and be credited back to Merit Academy. Based on the revenue, expenditures, and two lines of subsidy, Merit Academy is projected to pay the District \$362,581.64 in equal payments over the remainder of the fiscal year. President Barkley confirmed that the true-up document had been communicated to Merit Academy, and Mr. Kuritar stated that both he and Merit's Chief Financial Officer had reviewed and signed off on it.

Kuritar provided background on the history leading to this point. He shared that at a meeting in July with the former interim superintendent and Merit Academy representatives, was when the transportation dispute surfaced, with Merit asserting that declining enrollment stabilization funding should cover transportation costs. Given the size of the amount, the interim CFO and prior interim superintendent indicated it was a matter for the Board, though it was unclear whether the board was ever formally informed at that time. Discussions continued and culminated in a November 10th meeting that included a CDE representative, Merit Academy board members and staff, and district board members, the current CFO, and the current interim superintendent. Out of that meeting, the current true-up document was drafted.

Kuritar stated that during the January board meeting, the Board approved a document linking the forgiveness included in the current true-up to Merit Academy's agreement to participate in covering a portion of the FY26 Cost of Participation (COP) and transportation costs, in addition to the charter administrative fee. He noted that he was unaware of any response from Merit Academy board member after a letter was sent from President Barkley. Vice President Greenstreet sought clarification regarding the amount Merit Academy owes the district, specifically confirming that the total would be divided into payments between now and the end of the fiscal year rather than being required as a lump-sum payment. Greenstreet also asked whether the contract specifies that those funds are due immediately. President Barkley responded that she does not believe such language exists in writing. She referenced the November meeting, during which a CDE representative stated that, in his experience, the amount would typically be due immediately. Greenstreet emphasized that such stipulations should be clearly outlined in any new contract.

Barkley further explained that, in a meeting with legal counsel, it was advised that the district should not pursue transportation costs from prior years because there is no written agreement signed by Merit Academy requiring those payments. She added that the prior administration granted those concessions—whether or not it had the legal authority to do so—and that the current Board must operate within the framework of those past decisions. Barkley noted that attempting to recoup those past transportation costs is not considered a viable option for the current Board.

Secretary Gordon clarified that the current true-up is a revision of what the Board approved in January, acknowledging that the Board cannot require Merit Academy to pay a portion of the COP. Although Merit declined the request, she expressed hope that Merit will collaborate with the district moving forward, as the district cannot continue covering these expenses without the sales tax. She noted that reserves are currently funding capital projects, which is not sustainable, and emphasized the need for shared responsibility.

Director Gilgenast stated that while she understood the background of the issue, she was unclear about the specific action being proposed. Barkley explained that the January-approved true-up included a COP contingency, but the version being presented for approval no longer includes that contingency and must be finalized for audit purposes. Greenstreet added that the district's attorney advised that while the law does not require Merit to contribute toward the COP, it also does not prohibit them from doing so, which Kuritar confirmed. Gilgenast shared that her understanding was that the cost of the COP was previously a split cost because the payment was taken "off the top" of the sales tax revenue and wondered if there was an agreement. Barkley explained that the issue relates to the wording of the sales tax measure, which was approved before Merit became a charter school. After Merit was chartered, the sales tax revenue continued to be applied to the COP first before any remaining funds were distributed.

Director Davidson asked Kuritar whether it would benefit the district to have more formal agreements with Merit Academy documented in writing, and Kuritar confirmed that he intends to begin drafting those agreements in March. Davidson emphasized the importance of having clear written agreements to ensure consistent and transparent operations.

Greenstreet noted that when discussing declining enrollment funds, the conversation has focused primarily on transportation, but those dollars also support athletics, clubs, and activities that the district continues to offer at the same level despite shrinking enrollment. She explained that while students from Merit Academy and the growing homeschool population participate in these programs, they are funded solely through the per-pupil revenue of students enrolled in district-run schools, making the current model unsustainable and in need of future action. Kuritar clarified that the excess funding is to assist with the winding down of overhanging expenses, and that CDE considers it inappropriate to apply those funds to things like transportation. Gordon shared that, to her recollection, the first public announcement that the five-year averaging "ghost student" funding would be used for transportation occurred during a forum related to the November 2024 sales tax vote. She noted that the information was shared by Merit Academy's former CFO rather than district leadership and expressed concern that this was inappropriate, as decisions about how those funds are used should be made by the district, not Merit Academy. Kuritar responded that, ultimately, decisions about the use of those funds rest with the district. However, he noted that the narrative continues, as he recently received a letter from Merit Academy reiterating the position that those dollars should be used to provide transportation for their students.

Director Gilgenast stated that following questions raised at the last meeting, she contacted five or six other districts, including some with charter schools, to better understand how stabilization funds are typically used, and found that many were bewildered by the scenario and could not identify a comparable precedent. She added that, despite researching the issue, she was unable to find an alternative interpretation of the funds' intended and appropriate use. Barkley explained that at the state level, stabilization funding is intended to address the reality that student enrollment can decline faster than a district can reduce services. She noted that the funding provides a temporary buffer to help cover fixed costs, while allowing the district time to make thoughtful budget adjustments without compromising its core mission of educating students. She added that using the funds in this way is the responsible approach to ensuring students continue to receive a quality education. Gilgenast noted that she specifically asked other districts how stabilization funds are handled when a district's enrollment is declining while a charter school within the district is growing. She stated that, based on the examples she found, that dynamic did not change how the funds were ultimately used in those situations.

Barkley returned to Director Gilgenast's question regarding the approval process, stating that one option would be to approve the FY25 true-up as presented, treating it as a standalone item with no connection to future years, which she believed would achieve the Board's intended outcome. Greenstreet emphasized that when Kuritar joined the district, there was significant uncertainty around the district's finances, including a decline in reserve funds from \$10 million to less than \$5 million over four years and multiple actions carried out without formal contracts. She highlighted that Kuritar has recognized the need for careful oversight to ensure fairness for all students, noting that the district can no longer afford to provide services without accountability. Greenstreet stressed that this approach is not intended to penalize Merit Academy or its students, but rather to ensure that educational dollars are available to support all students across the district. She added that maintaining transportation to Merit Academy is important to preserve student choice, but doing so in the future will require financial collaboration among all schools, and she expressed hope that Merit Academy will be willing to contribute to that effort. Interim Superintendent Slocum expressed appreciation for Kuritar and his team's work on true-ups, audits, and other financial matters, noting the leadership they've provided in addressing past issues. She urged the Board to prioritize getting agreements and decisions in writing moving forward to ensure clarity and fairness in funding for all students across the district.

Director Gilgenast emphasized the importance of understanding the difference between the funding received per student and the actual per-pupil count, noting that this delta is crucial for planning how to adjust for declining enrollment. She stressed the need to closely monitor that number and be thoughtful in future budget adjustments. Barkley emphasized that the district's current spending and reserves are approaching a critical point, and continuing at the current rate is unsustainable. She stressed that in order to preserve school choice and ensure the district's core mission of educating students, the Board must make responsible and sometimes difficult financial decisions. Barkley added that if adjustments to transportation or other areas are necessary to keep schools operational, those decisions must be made to protect the long-term success of the district.

Gordon explained that approving a true-up is not usually a Board responsibility, but it has become necessary because of a lack of clear agreements with Merit Academy. She emphasized that formalizing these contracts would allow the Board to focus on its core duties while letting administration manage services independently, and noted that clear agreements could result in reduced administrative fees with Merit Academy in the future, benefiting both the district and Merit Academy.

DISTRICT/MERIT SERVICES TRUE-UP FY25

President Barkley requested a motion to approve the District/Merit Services True-Up for FY25 as it is presented, decoupling it from future years, only for FY25.

MOTION Greenstreet, second Gordon, to approve the District/Merit Services True-Up FY25.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

EXECUTIVE SESSION I

MOTION Gordon, second Greenstreet, to adjourn to executive session at 4:41 p.m. pursuant to Citation: C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b): Conferences with an attorney for the purposes of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions.

Particularities: District will be receiving legal advice from their counsel regarding settlement of Pool v. Woodland Park School District RE-2.

The Board of Education was joined by attorney Matt Werner(remotely), Interim Superintendent Ginger Slocum and Chief Financial Officer David Kuritar in executive session.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson, Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION Gilgenast, second Davidson, to adjourn from executive session at 5:08 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson, Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT FOR POOL V. WOODLAND PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-2

MOTION Greenstreet, second Gordon, to approve the Settlement for Pool v. Woodland Park School District RE-2.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

EXECUTIVE SESSION II

MOTION Davidson, second Gordon, to adjourn to executive session at 5:11 p.m. pursuant to Citation: C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(g) and C.R.S. § 24-72-204(3)(a)(XI)(A): Consideration of any documents protected by the mandatory nondisclosure provisions of Colorado Open Records Act (“CORA”).

Particularities: The Board will enter executive session to discuss the protected documents submitted by applicants for the superintendent chief executive position who are not finalists. C.R.S. § 24-72-204(3)(a)(XI)(A).

The Board of Education was joined by Dave Versteeg, Gary Gable (remotely), and Jason Jacob (remotely at 6:12 p.m.) of Grundmeyer Leader Services in executive session.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson, Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION Davidson, second Gilgenast, to adjourn from executive session at 7:10 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson, Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

ADJOURN SPECIAL MEETING

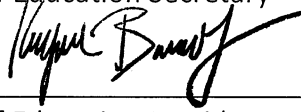
MOTION Gordon, second Gilgenast, to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED; Voting Aye – Barkley, Davidson, Gilgenast, Gordon, Greenstreet.

Attest:



Board of Education Secretary



Board of Education President

FY25 _ True Up
Merit Academy

Revenue	Account	Paid according to Schedule	FY25 Actual Due to Merit	FY25 True Up	To / From
	Charter SFA Program Allocation	\$5,075,274.44	\$5,086,414.76	(\$11,140.32)	owed to Merit
	2004 Mill Levy Override	292,640.72	294,114.17	(1,473.45)	owed to Merit
	Charter City Sales Tax	669,036.26	377,918.93	291,117.33	owed to district
	Charter Newmont Grant	4,586.65	4,586.65	0.00	
	Charter Capital Construction	64,548.54	77,406.45	(12,857.91)	owed to Merit
	Charter State CTE	4,219.68	-	4,219.68	owed to district
	Charter State ECEA	19,546.86	19,546.86	0.00	owed to district
	Charter State ELPA	4,652.62	325.00	4,327.62	owed to district
	Charter State GT	9,917.78	4,390.56	5,527.22	owed to district
	Charter State READ Act	15,402.84	10,933.80	4,469.04	owed to district
	Charter State Rural	15,095.08	-	15,095.08	owed to district
	Charter Federal IDEA	12,487.90	9,280.00	3,207.90	owed to district
	Charter Federal Title I	(57,515.56)	(69,018.68)	11,503.12	owed to district
	Charter Federal Title IIA	5,719.98	5,719.98	0.00	owed to district
	Charter Federal Title IIIA	1,030.06	1,236.06	(206.00)	owed to district
	Charter Federal Title IVA	5,460.84	5,460.84	0.00	owed to district
Total Revenue to Merit		\$6,142,104.69	\$5,828,315.38	\$313,789.31	owed to district

Expenditures (Buyback Services)	Account	Paid according to Schedule	FY25 Actual Due to District	FY25 True Up	
	Charter Admin Fee	\$17,963.87	\$254,320.74	\$236,356.87	owed to district
	Charter SpEd Admin Services	-	-	0.00	owed to district
	Charter TS Gold Testing	790.60	549.60	(241.00)	owed to Merit
	Charter Infinite Campus Software	6,058.98	11,475.00	5,416.02	owed to district
	Charter Utilities	186,491.68	164,090.50	(22,401.18)	owed to Merit
	Charter Transportation Costs	-	200,856.01	200,856.01	owed to district
	Charter Property Insurance	14,347.30	44,648.00	30,300.70	owed to district
	Charter Maintenance / Grounds	2,500.00	49,589.98	47,089.98	owed to district
	Charter Technology Systems	6,458.34	2,207.12	(4,251.22)	owed to merit
	Charter Internet Services	7,990.84	3,815.43	(4,175.41)	owed to merit
	Charter Activity Vehicle Use	-	1,554.44	1,554.44	owed to district
	Charter Community Facility Use Fees	-	-	0.00	owed to district
	Merit Academy - Leanna Tally	-	(4,500.00)	(4,500.00)	owed to merit
Total Buyback Services		\$242,601.61	\$728,606.82	\$486,005.21	owed to district

Flow-Through To Merit Academy Net of Buyback Services	\$5,899,503.08	\$5,099,708.56	\$799,794.52	owed to district
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Non-Recurring Assistance By District

Charter Transportation Costs*	(\$200,856.01)	One-Time Adjustment
Charter Admin Fee**	(\$236,356.87)	One-Time Adjustment

Total Non-Recurring Assistance By District	(\$437,212.88)
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TOTAL DUE TO WPSD	\$362,581.64	owed to district
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*FY26 Transportation costs to be passed through to Merit Academy effective 07-01-2025

**FY26 Administrative costs to be passed through to Merit Academy effective 07-01-2025

David Kuritar 01 / 06 / 2026

Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer Faircloth 12 / 19 / 2025