

# Salida School District R-32-J

## Board of Education

### Regular Meeting of the Board

May 12, 2026

2nd Floor Conference Room, 627 Oak Street

- 1) President Breckenridge Petit called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. In attendance were Directors Jodi Breckenridge Petit, Ben Hill, Karen Lundberg, Mandy Paschall, Tiffany Rhodes, Jennifer Schuchman, and Derek Vaughn.

#### a) **Board Member Comments**

*Director Lundberg* thanked the principals for their work and dedication and leading the way through an incredible 25-26 school year. She also shared her excitement for Savannah Craft, the addition of team leads and continued development of Curriculum and Instruction coaching support for teachers.

*Director Hill* acknowledged the winners of local scholarship funds, totalling over \$150k with several students who took home \$5k, \$10k, and one who earned \$15k. He reminded those in the room that Salida Schools students also earned two Boettcher Scholarships, a Daniels Fund Scholarship, a National Merit Scholar, and a Greenhouse Scholar and shared the

*Director Pashcall* thanked LES Principal Cory Scheffel for his service and congratulated him on his final board meeting. She welcomed incoming LES Principal Ann Systma who was selected following an extensive search and recommendation by the selection team at LES. Salida Schools is excited to have her join the team!

*Director Schuchman* spoke about reviewing the two perception surveys offered to Salida Schools staff during the 25-26 school year, including the NewMeasures survey offered through this third party, and the TLCC survey which is offered every two years through a partnership with CDE and CEA. These surveys highlight the general good perception of staff and identify areas of growth. She thanked staff for sharing their honest feedback and looks forward to continued work to improve compensation. She also noted the loss of former student Kaden Sites, and thanked the Salida community for always showing up for each other, even in difficult times.

*Director Rhodes* also thanked Scheffel, and noted that the success of students at the high school level is a reflection of the entire Salida Schools program starting with ECC and enhanced at the elementary and middle school levels. She thanked Business Manager Aaron Dobson for his dedication to finding a new path forward for health insurance. His innovative idea sets the District up for continued improvement in cost savings in coming years, with a primary goal of making sure that staff have access to quality healthcare choices.

*Director Vaughn* thanked Dobson for all of his work on the insurance problem while working through budget season at the same time.

*Director Breckenridge Petit* then addressed comments from Mayor Justin Critelli during a recent City Council meeting. First she defended student council and noted that it is in fact a leadership development program that supports local non-profits through community service programs and activities. She noted the IGA that guides the SRO program between the City and the District and any changes to that partnership must be noted through that legal agreement. She noted that the District does not allow access to student or staff contact information to protect the privacy and safety of both. The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey is available for review. She talked about the significant contributions that SSD offers the partnership between the City and the District from the dog park to youth sports and facility sharing. She acknowledged the \$30,000 contribution the District makes to fund the SRO position, and the added benefits the SRO is offered including staff rates at the early childhood center. Finally, she noted the respect that is important in our incredible small town and community.

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There were no **Written Messages to the Board**

**Public Comments** Jen Lang spoke first as the mom of a graduating senior. Her daughter remembers attending elementary school in the old building, and thanked the SSD from start to finish and potentially inspiring another teacher. She then switched to her Dean of Students hat and thanked Cory for his service to the community and welcomed Anne. Then she shared the *Cory Limerick* "There once was a principal so smart, In Carhartts and bow times, pure art. He loved the students and good laughs, And sorties in rafts, But most of all, he led with his heart."

b) Director Schuchman made a motion to **Approve the Agenda with the following changes:**

- Table Item 3i Approve District Liability Insurance to June
- Table Item 3n Activities Department Structure to June
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Director Rhodes seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mrs. Lundberg, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Dr. Rhodes, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Vaughn, yes; and was approved.

## 2) Reports

a) Guest Reports - None

b) Campus Reports - No Detailed Report

### c) District Reports

i) Mike Lamond spoke as the President of SEA and a member of the Collaborative Bargaining Team. He noted the excitement of the culture and spirit of partnership in the room. He thanked Dobson for his work in the last 10 months and that folks are excited to be part of the SSD team. Superintendent Dr. Blackburn recognized the atypical nature of CBT, and that while it can be hard, he thanked the team for the trust that has been built between staff and the board. CBT allows everyone to have a voice at the table and the team looks for the win/win scenario based on data and identifying the gaps after review of a current market analysis. Director Breckenridge Petit thanked the team for their patience with her during her time on the board, as she has really pushed to have the budget scrubbed to develop confidence and prioritize getting money directly to the humans who make the District special.

### ii) Celebrate Retiring Employees

Blackburn thanked retiring employees for their dedication to the community, including Ali Manthey (SMS Art), Stacy Follet (District - Speech-Language Pathologist), Maggie Falconi (District - MLL Support), Virginia Jones (ECC Teacher), Terri Buck (SMS Paraprofessional), and Marcia Veltri (LES Paraprofessional). He then shared his gratitude as a dad, as his youngest child will graduate this spring, and thanked everyone in the District who taught and guided all of his kids through their education with Salida Schools. (There were tears).

### iii) Digital Security Measures

The District recently received notices of potential data breaches with two key providers, Naviance which is used as a tool in SHS advisory classes, and Canvas that is used across the country for educational programming. Blackburn shared a reminder to NEVER give your name/info/passwords/bank account numbers or other and to guide your children to the same. The District will watch for updates from these companies as they learn more about the depth of the breach and any needed follow up from the District.

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- iv) **Curriculum, Leadership, Evaluation** - Curriculum and Instruction Director Savannah Craft shared the progress that she and Curriculum Coordinator April Holdinhaus have made this year, with huge leaps forward in cataloging the District's curriculum in a way that is easily reviewed and shared with staff and the community, and making gains to enhancing PD days, and supplementing leadership opportunities for teachers. This added support was seen with 20%+ increases in positive responses in the perception survey data. She is excited to watch the momentum and excitement gather. Dr. Blackburn spoke to the work being done to improve the evaluation process and supporting teams while building in leadership opportunities. The District work towards Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum will allow for better structure and framework for teachers moving forward and will also help guide evaluation and coaching, offer clear guidelines, add balance for capacity and time management.
  
- v) **District Awards** - Dr. Blackburn shared the banners awarded to the Crest Academy for earning another John Irwin School of Excellence, and LES for another Governors Distinguished Improvement. He noted the focus on taking more time with the basics in K/1/2 so that students really blossom into 3rd and 4th grades. He shared the banner the District received this year, again, for District of Distinction and noted that this reflects our staff's dedication to truly taking care of each student by name and by need and that our success is reflected from students attaining scholarships such as the Boettcher, Daniels, and National Merit, but also through every SPED student and kids who need a bit of extra support to get to the graduation ready to lead productive lives. By taking care of individual students, the test scores take care of themselves. The staff perception data shows improvement over last year and identifies pay and benefits as a key area for continued improvement. The SSD partnership with CMC was recognized as a key for the success of preparing SSD grads for the next step in their journey, and has helped students articulate a plan for their future. Blackburn also noted all of the very "Salida" things students share including getting swim lessons, bike safety training and a helmet, river safety training and a PFD, and getting the chance to try out a kayak. Director Rhodes noted the success of the new format for SHS Scholarship Night and that donors really liked getting to visit with students. Transportation Manager Evalyn Parks offered an update on the electric bus project, noting the delivery of the electric buses will likely be later than initially anticipated. Dobson thanked everyone for their hard work this spring through budget and insurance redesign, and acknowledged Superintendent Blackburn who set a goal of paying people more and encourages him to think big to solve problems.

The Board took a break from 7:10-7:17.

- 3) Director Hill made a motion to approve the following Consent Agenda Items
  - a) Approval of Minutes of Regular Board Meeting on **April 14, 2026**
  - b) Claims Payable – All Funds
  - c) Claims Payable – Bills over \$20,000
  - d) Personnel Items
  - e) Acknowledge and Approve Exhibits and Regulations as Recommended by the Superintendent - None
  - f) Approve on 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Policies - None
  - g) Approve on 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading Policies - None
  - h) Approve Renewal of Student Accident Insurance for the District k-12 Offering
  - ~~i) Approve District Liability Insurance~~
  - j) Acknowledge Auditor Engagement Letter for 25-26 Budget Year Audit
  - k) Acknowledge ESEA Assurances and Accept Title I funds of \$183,056 for Fiscal Year '26-'27
  - l) Approve Changes to Management Salary Schedule

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m) Approval of third party investigation expenditure to GPMBF, LLC not to exceed \$40,000

~~n) Activities Department Structure~~

Director Paschall seconded the motion. Board Secretary noted that she had fixed several typos in the minutes which were sent out shortly before the meeting. Director Hill asked how many students used the student accident insurance. Dobson did not have an immediate answer, but noted the District is required by law to offer an option for students. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mrs. Lundberg, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Dr. Rhodes, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Vaughn, yes; and was approved.

### 4) Discussion Items

- a) **Handwriting/Typing Curriculum** - Curriculum Coordinator April Holdinhaus shared a presentation about handwriting curriculum. She led a committee with teachers from LES this year to investigate handwriting curriculum. She discussed the importance of handwriting to enhance perception, boost executive functioning, more automatic and efficient brain activation when reading, and establishing connections in neurons when learning compared to typing. They discussed curriculum options and anticipated classroom time dedicated to the topic. The Board should expect next steps in the fall to review recommended curriculum, costs, and implementation.
- b) **Proposed 26-27 Budget, Appropriations Resolution** - Dobson walked the board through the proposed budget recommendation. There should be no surprises, as budget discussions started in January with wishlist items, and approval of capital project items to be taken care of during summer break. With two new board members going through their first budget approval season, he detailed some of the specific funds and how they interact with each other. He always budgets for the maximum cost, and then is able to narrow the gap with actual numbers as new staff members are hired and he gets actual numbers of who is going with District provided insurance options. The financial plan has been a wonderful tool to help guide the allocation of funds and identifies what happens when there is a cushion, with a focus on getting funds to staff. There are always unknowns like the weather which impacts things like heating bills, and what student enrollment will actually be, so the District's initial budget proposal includes a comfortable cushion.

### 5) Action Items

- a) Approve on 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Policies - None
- b) Director Lundberg made a motion to **Approve CBT Recommendation** to include:
  - i) Approve Changes to Certified Salary Schedule for 26-27 Budget Year
  - ii) Approve Negotiated Policy Updates

Director Schuchman seconded the motion. Director Pashcall asked that the details of the approval be more clear in the motion. Director Lundberg amended her motion to include:

Approve Changes to the Certified Salary Schedule for the 26-27 Budget Year  
Approve an update to GBGH-N PTO Bank  
Approve a \$2/hour raise for busdrivers  
Approve Certification stipends for nutrition staff  
Approve If/Then bonus following October Count

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Director Schuchman seconded the amended motion. The Board voted to accept the amended motion. Director Schuchman noted that she appreciated the CBT process this year, and feels it reflects an important metric of success. Said amended motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mrs. Lundberg, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Dr. Rhodes, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Vaughn, yes; and was approved.

- c) Director Schuchman made a motion to **Approve the Recommendation by the Insurance Committee, including revision to GBBB-R**. Director Rhodes seconded the motion. Director Breckenridge Petit shared that she attended one of the staff presentation to outline the new option being made available to staff and noted that there are great options that get the District through to the next step and allow for the salary schedule approved above. Thanks were shared with Dobson, Rhodes and the insurance committee for their innovative thinking and hope for next steps that will continue to improve on District offerings at an affordable price point for staff and the District. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mrs. Lundberg, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Dr. Rhodes, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Vaughn, yes; and was approved.
- d) Director Paschall made a motion to table the consideration of **a County Land MOU** to the June meeting. Director Schuchman seconded the motion to table. The County is still working on a proposal for the SSD BOE to consider. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mrs. Lundberg, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Dr. Rhodes, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Vaughn, yes; and was tabled to June.

#### 6) Board Communications and Committee Reports

- a) Policy Book– Directors Breckenridge Petit and Paschall were working with Superintendent Blackburn to review student and HR handbooks to be ready for review by the Board in June.
- b) DAC Executive Team–Director Breckenridge Petit is ready to start building these committees and identifying volunteers who want to serve on the DAC Executive Team.
- c) DAC Finance–Director Hill has been working Dobson through the budget development phase who has been working on a cool Excel Spreadsheet to help visualize how changes potentially impact the District. Director Vaughn is getting settled in and learning more about the budget and budget process.
- d) DAC Facilities–Director Lundberg noted that capital projects are on target for the summer break, and the sale of the final Spartan Heights property is on track, and partnerships are coming together to begin to dig into long term commitments at the Holman property.
- e) DAC Communications–Director Schuchman noted the group review of the perspective surveys and a review of policies that guide District communication efforts.
- f) DAC Technology–Directors Schuchman and Vaughn have started to dig into the development of a strategic technology plan and the handwriting curriculum presentation brought up some additional questions to be considered. They noted the question about how much curriculum should be focused on digital components versus analog options. The board indicated that AI deserves more investigation, both as a tool for teachers and staff to streamline processes, and also how students learn and use the tool.
- g) DAC Wellness (&SEL)-- Director Rhodes met with Superintendent Blackburn to discuss the development of the Wellness Policy, which includes decisions about nutrition guidelines about food in schools. This policy has wide impact and includes things like SEL and health curriculum. Director Paschall has some concerns about making sure that athletes are given the opportunity to eat the fuel needed to be prepared for practice and games.
- h) DAC Activities–Director Paschall looks forward to the new activities director starting in June to begin really leaning into a new strategic activities plan. She thanked interim AD Jeremy Grier for his work this semester.
- i) BOCES - Director Rhodes shared an update that BOCES is doing well and are also facing an issue with insurance costs. The District will have the same coordinator next year which will provide continuity to the program. They

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are working on moving their office which will help save some money.

- 7) Future Business
  - a) Topics for Future meetings
  - b) Calendar of events
    - i) **June 9, 2026 Regular Meeting** 6 p.m., **627 Oak Street**
      - (1) Agenda Review - Karen

Director Hill made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 pm.

Minutes were approved at the June 9, 2026 regular meeting of the board of education. A signed copy is available in the Central Administration Office at 627 Oak Street, Salida, CO

Kim LeTourneau, Board Secretary

Jodi Breckenridge Petit, Board President