

Pierce High School District #2

Monday, August 11, 2026- Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The Pierce Public School Board of Education met for the regular monthly meeting at 6:30 pm in the boardroom of Pierce High School. Members present were Dan Unseld, Ryan Collison, Lisa Freeman, Stefanie Dvorak, Adam Venteicher and Todd Wragge. Also, present were Superintendent Kendall Steffensen, High School Principal Mark Brahmer, Elementary Principal Trent Suehl (who arrived after the elementary open house was finished), and fourteen guests

Notice of the meeting was printed in the Pierce County Leader and posted on Pierce Public Schools website.

A welcome was extended to the public, the open meetings act pointed out.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Communication and correspondence from the Public

Sheryl Volk addressed the Board regarding district finances, questioning the need for additional funding following voter approval of the bond issue. Ms. Volk referenced an article concerning governance and accountability of school boards in Nebraska and expressed concerns regarding financial oversight. She also responded to and commented on remarks made by other speakers.

Chris Fisher spoke about district revenues, including tax and state funding, and expressed the opinion that the district has sufficient financial resources. Mr. Fisher questioned the Board's consideration of increasing the property tax request.

Dave Lineman expressed concerns regarding the Board's spending practices and fiscal management. Mr. Lineman voiced strong dissatisfaction with current financial decisions and cautioned that continued concerns among community members could lead to increased public opposition.

Mike Waggner echoed concerns raised by previous speakers regarding district spending. Mr. Waggner also expressed concerns about the Superintendent's performance and stated his belief that a change in district leadership should be considered.

Carla Streff stated that she had served on the bond committee and expressed concerns regarding the composition of the committee and the perspectives represented. Ms. Streff questioned whether the district is exercising fiscal responsibility in managing public funds.

Brandon Wagner expressed concern for community members facing financial hardships, noting rising loan and borrowing costs. Mr. Wagner also expressed concern that future flood control expenditures could contribute to increased tax burdens.

Consent Agenda

Wragge moved and Collison seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda consisting of the approval of minutes from the previous meeting, approval of claims and payment of bills, and financial reports. No further discussion. Voting unanimous, motion carried 6-0.

Reports and Information

High school students, Baily Thelen and Evelyn Skrdla reported on behalf of FFA. They had a welcome for 6th graders, went on a trip to Niobrara, and are planning a back to school BBQ.

Written reports were given to the board from the high school and elementary principal. Highlights from the elementary report include the current enrollment at the Pierce Elementary as well as the number of children registered for Pre-K and Kindergarten. The elementary SPED staff had training on August 3rd and 4th. The training was a behavior management program and teaches staff how to prevent, de-escalate, and intervene in behavioral interactions. Staff development and training have occurred. The elementary open house was today, August 10th. The first day of school is August 11th. Picture day will be on August 19th. DIBELS and MAP assessments will be given within the first month.

Information for the high school included information on new student orientation that was held on August 6th. There are a number of dual credit classes being offered this year. High school teachers also completed their work-days and school starts on Aug 11th. MAP testing will occur in October for high school students. There are 5 new teammates recruits for the mentoring program and Mr. Brahmer is looking for volunteers. Fall sports practices started on Monday, Aug 10th. There are no student teachers this semester. There was also no staff turnover and Mr. Brahmer was very happy with this, knowing we have great, experienced teachers coming back for this school year.

Superintendent Steffensen included information on the elementary bonds have been sold at an interest rate of 3.7%. This means that \$9,660,000 of bonds were sold, but the purchasers paid \$9,855.185 for them. This leaves approximately \$300,000 of bonds that could be sold at a later date or not sold at all and applied to our bond balance. The elementary bonds were deposited into the special building fund on July 31st and a payment schedule will be set up with Hausmann Construction. The interest that is gained on the bond can be used to make payment on the bond. The biweekly meetings with Hausmann Construction and CWP Architects regarding the elementary projects have continued. The windows have all been installed and the doors will be installed as soon as all the hardware arrives.

Discussion Items

The board decided on Monday, August 24th at 6:30pm. The purpose of this retreat is to provide him guidance regarding budget composition, specifically tax asking for the general fund, special building fund, and qualified capitol purpose undertaking fund.

The preliminary budget presentation was very similar to the information presented at the July 20th retreat. Steffensen included the budget factors spreadsheet that has been updated to reflect the current general fund bank balance, August bills and a prediction of August payroll. The Nebraska Department of Education has released Property Tax Authority Certification by school district, which makes the LB243 calculation much easier to read. The three-column budget form that includes the prior years actual expenditures and receipts, the second column is an estimate of the current year's expenditures and receipts, and the third column is an estimate of the upcoming year's expenditures and receipts will be available at the budget retreat.

A date and time for the budget and tax request hearing needs to be determined, but there are two paths for the budget and tax request hearings depending upon the property tax request. Because of this, the board elects to determine this after the budget retreat once the board decides on the tax asking percentage.

Action Items

For the first action item, Wragge moved and Freeman seconded to approve the review of policy sections 4000, 5000, and 6000. Voting unanimous, motion passed 6-0.

For the second action item, discussion was had regarding adopting the resolution to increase the school district's base growth percentage used to determine the school district's property tax request by up to 6%. The board was reminded of the two votes that are occurring regarding this. This vote is the first step. This vote is to increase the school district's base growth by up to 6%. This does not mean that the amount will be accessed. If the increase of base growth is not approved, the growth is lost forever as it will not be included in any future year's LB 243 calculation. Adam clarified that if the board votes to approve the 6%, but it is not accessed, that it carries over to the following year. This statement is correct. Collison motions and Freeman seconded to adopt the resolution as presented with an increase school district's base growth percentage used to determine the school district's property tax request by up to 6%. The board had further discussion about the importance of accessing this for the future of the school district but believed that the projects that are priority for the high school should be covered by what we have in the general fund. The hope is to not access any or all of the 6%. Voting 5-1 with Ventechier being opposed. Motion carried.

The third action item was to determine the meeting notice method. LB 596 eliminated the requirement of publishing meeting notices in a newspaper and instead allows the Board of Education to select an official method of notice. KSB School Law strongly encourages official notice to be posted on school district website. Wragge motioned and Dvorak seconded to have the primary notice method will be the Pierce Public School website. Discussion was had about

continuing to have it in the paper as well. This will continue. Voting unanimously. Motion carried 6-0.

Board of Education Professional Development

Steffensen relayed Board of Education development opportunities.

Topics for next month's agenda

Steffensen provided topics for next month's agenda to include: finalized budget presentation, adopt the tax requests, adopt the budgets, remind board of superintendent evaluation in November, provide board superintendent vacation and sick log, and disclose board of education members purchasing EHA insurance.

Collison moved and Wragge seconded to adjourn. Voting unanimous, motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm.

Stefanie Dvorak, Secretary

Pierce Public Schools

Board of Education, District 2;Pierce, NE 68767