

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 13, 2026

The Bruneau Grand View School District Mission: BGVSD will provide a high-quality education, prepare students for futures, and enable students to be positive contributors to society.

Board Members Present:

Scott McNeley, Chairman
Allen Merrick, Vice Chair
Steve Boren, Trustee-arrived 7:13pm
Raelynn Mathews, Trustee
Elaine Eldridge, Trustee

Administration Present:

Ken Higbee, Interim Superintendent
JayDene Aquiso, Clerk/Treasurer
Kailee McClure, Principal
Jonathan Waterlander, Principal

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Scott McNeley called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Clerk Aquiso confirmed that a quorum was present.

- II. **PUBLIC INPUT** Those individuals wishing to address the Board may sign up at the board materials table and must submit the completed form to the Board Clerk. Individuals will be given a maximum of three (3) minutes to present their views. Open Meetings requirements limit the ability of the Board to discuss or take action on any topic not previously on the agenda; however, the issue may be included on a future agenda if appropriate. Please note: The Board cannot receive complaints against personnel in open session, and recommend that concerns be resolved through the following order: (1) Teacher or Staff, (2) Principal or Supervisor, (3) Superintendent, (4) The Board of Trustees. District Office Phone: 208-834-2260.

Public input was received in support of Mr. Waterlander and his leadership following his resignation effective at the end of the school year.

- Brandi Lisle read letters of support on behalf of herself, Amanda Dygert, and Beth Gasper.
- Stephanie Danner read a letter of support for Mr. Waterlander on behalf of herself and Claire Smith.
- Sammie Steiner provided public comment in support.
- Trina Fowers provided public comment in support.
- Hayden Griggs read a letter on behalf of Laura Varga.
- Katy Carothers provided public comment in support.
- Mandi Boren provided public comment in support.

III. ACTION ITEMS I

A. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Trustee Merrick made a motion to approve the agenda. Trustee Boren provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Administration of Oath of Office to newly elected School Board Members: Clerk Aquiso administered the Oath of Office to newly elected School Board Members: Elaine Eldridge (Zone 1), Raelynn Mathews (Zone 3), and Steve Boren (Zone 5). Each trustee read and affirmed the Oath of Office.
- C. Trustees reviewed the Code of Ethics for School Board Members. Chairman McNeley read the Code of Ethics aloud, and all trustees signed the Code of Ethics.
- D. Approval of Consent Agenda
 - 1. Minutes for December 9, 2025 Regular Meeting
 - 2. Accounts Payable/Payroll – January 13, 2026
 - 3. School Accounts – December 2025
(*Bruneau Elementary, Grand View Elementary, Rimrock Jr./Sr. High School*)
 - 4. Paychecks for: Ashley Merrick, Adam and Anee-Lynn Eldridge, and Kellie McNeley
 - 5. Use of GVE & BES for Little League (Community) Basketball

MOTION: Trustee Boren made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Trustee Eldridge seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.**

IV. REPORTS TO THE BOARD

A. Secondary Principal Report

Mr. Waterlander, Secondary Principal, thanked the staff and community for the support provided. He then provided the Board with an overview of Rimrock academic and honor roll students. Rimrock academic data in math, reading, and language showed continued strong growth for most grade levels. Overall growth exceeded established goals, and achievement scores exceeded the national average across all grades.

Mr. Waterlander also reported on Rimrock culture and athletics and presented a proposed senior trip.

Employee Recognition – Katy Carothers was recognized for her work as Events Manager for all athletics, a role that is especially demanding during basketball season. She also runs the IDLA classroom and supports 58 students across 81 classes, including 26 students taking 35 dual credit classes. A 100% pass rate was achieved for every IDLA credit earned during the fall semester.

B. Grand View Elementary Principal Report

Mrs. McClure, Elementary Principal, provided an update on K–5 student growth, including recent progress as measured through the i-Ready and Amira assessments.

Discussion was held regarding the amount of student testing. Dr. Higbee discussed MAP testing and related scores. Dr. Higbee will provide information on the number of instructional hours dedicated to testing at the next board meeting.

Employee Recognition-Employee recognition was given to all staff.

C. Interim Superintendent Report/Dr. Higbee

Dr. Higbee presented and discussed the professional development scheduled for January 16.

Personnel Matters

Personnel matters were reviewed, including letters of intent to be sent by February 1 and advertising for a Math Teacher position at Rimrock.

Budget Committee and Community Meetings

Dr. Higbee expressed interest in establishing a Budget Committee consisting of members from the Leadership Team, teachers, and community members. Community meetings are planned for February in Oreana, Grand View, and Bruneau. Dr. Higbee will invite community members to participate in the committees during these meetings. Trustee Eldridge recommended sending mailers to the community announcing the meetings.

Policy Committee

Discussion was held regarding how the Board would like to proceed with the Policy Committee. Trustee Merrick noted that some policies require annual review or need to be addressed as issues arise. He also suggested that certain policies may need minor updates. It was recommended that policy meetings be held once a month.

Virtual Education Options

Dr. Higbee discussed exploring virtual education options to support students returning to BGVJSD, including reviewing the number of homeschool students. Trustee Mathews suggested conducting a survey of students and parents to gauge interest in a virtual school, starting at the elementary level. Chairman McNeley emphasized focusing on doing one thing well rather than spreading resources too thin. Trustee Mathews also suggested a hybrid model with students attending a few days per week and bringing the proposal to the February community meetings

Student Presentations

Dr. Higbee expressed interest in bringing back student presentations at Board meetings to highlight student achievements.

Superintendent Goals

Superintendent goals were reviewed, focusing on community outreach and coaching staff to build highly effective classrooms:

- **Goal 1: Instructional Leadership – “Championship Classroom” Initiative**
 - *Objective:* Define and implement a district-wide standard for instructional excellence and classroom culture.
 - *Action:* Launch the “Championship Classroom” framework at the January 16th professional development.
 - *Success Measure:* 100% of staff trained in the framework; classroom walkthroughs at Bruneau, Grand View, and Rimrock showing alignment with core instructional values.
- **Goal 2: Community Engagement**
 - *Objective:* Bridge the gap between district operations and the community by highlighting student and staff achievements.
 - *Action:* Transition School Board meetings to include “Celebrations of Success.”
 - *Success Measure:* Beginning with the Student Council in February, each monthly board meeting will feature a student or staff presentation highlighting district-wide best practices.
- **Goal 3: Comprehensive Student Support & Safety**
 - *Objective:* Provide staff with tools and external resources to manage student mental health and behavioral crises effectively.
 - *Action:* Integrate the Crisis System of Care (Wendy Young) and the Mobile Response Team into standard district procedures.
 - *Success Measure:* Reduced teacher burnout related to crisis management and a documented referral process for the Mobile Response Team in every school.
- **Goal 4: Fiscal Responsibility & Facility Optimization**

- *Objective:* Ensure district resources focus on student outcomes while maintaining the long-term viability of rural facilities.
- *Action:* Conduct a mid-year budget review with Mrs. Aquiso to ensure fiscal responsibility.
- *Success Measure:* Presentation of a balanced budget outlook prioritizing classroom needs and facility maintenance.

Financial and Operations Reports

The monthly financial report as of December 31 was presented. The grounds and maintenance report was also reviewed.

V. ACTION ITEMS II

The Board may take action to approve, deny, amend, modify, or postpone an action, or take no action, on any of the items listed below:

- A. Reorganization of the Board - Elect Chairperson
Chair**

Board Reorganization – 2026 School Year

Chair Declaration

As Chair of the School District Board of Trustees, Chair McNeley declared the Board of Trustees dissolved for the purposes of reorganization and called for the Board to proceed with reorganization for the 2026 school year.

Interim Superintendent Role / Board Chair Election

Dr. Higbee, Interim Superintendent, declared the office of Chair of the Board open and requested nominations. It was noted that if more than one nomination was received, a vote would be conducted via roll call.

Nominations and Roll Call Votes

1. Scott McNeley

- Nominated by Trustee Boren; seconded by Trustee Merrick
- Roll call vote:
 - Mathews – No
 - Eldridge – No
 - Boren – Yes
 - Merrick – Yes
 - McNeley – Yes

2. Trustee Eldridge

- Nominated by Trustee Mathews; seconded by Trustee Merrick
- Roll call vote:
 - Mathews – Yes

- Eldridge – Yes
- Boren – No
- Merrick – No
- McNeley – No

3. Trustee Mathews

- Nominated by Trustee Eldridge; seconded by Trustee McNeley
- Roll call vote:
 - Mathews – Yes
 - Eldridge – Yes
 - Boren – No
 - Merrick – No
 - McNeley – No

Motion to Accept Nominations

Trustee Merrick made a motion to accept the nominations for Board Chair. Trustee Boren seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Assumption of Office

Chairman McNeley assumed the position of Board Chair for the 2026 school year.

The Chair assumes the position and declares the following office open for nominations.

Board Reorganization – Vice Chair and Treasurer/Clerk Elections

Vice Chair Election

1. Trustee Merrick

- Nominated by Trustee Boren; seconded by Trustee Merrick
- **Trustee Eldridge**
Nominated by Trustee Mathews; seconded by Trustee Boren
- Roll call vote: for Vice Chair-Merrick
 - Mathews – No
 - Eldridge – No
 - Merrick – Yes
 - McNeley – Yes
 - Boren – Yes

Treasurer/Clerk Election

- **Nominee:** Mrs. Aquiso

Moved by Trustee Boren; seconded by Trustee Merrick. Motion carried unanimously.

Closing of Nominations and Appointment

A motion was requested to close nominations and accept the nominated candidates for the offices of Vice Chair, Treasurer/Clerk.

MOTION: Trustee Boren made a motion to approve the Vice Chair, Treasurer/Clerk. Trustee Merrick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Appoint Trustees to committees

In the January 2025 annual meeting, trustees were appointed to the committees as follows:

- a. Budget Committee - Trustee Eldridge and Trustee Boren
- b. Strategic Planning Committee - Trustee Merrick
- c. Technology Committee - Trustee McNeley
- d. Curriculum Committee - Trustee Boren and Trustee Mathews
- e. Policy Committee - Trustee Matthews and Trustee Merrick

MOTION: Trustee Merrick made a motion to approve the appointments as stated. Trustee Boren provided the second. The motion passed unanimously

C. Approve 2026-2027 Regular Board Meetings dates

MOTION: Trustee Merrick made a motion to approve 2026-2027 Regular Board Meeting dates. Trustee Boren provided the second. The motion passed unanimously

D. Approval of Resignation – Jonathan Waterlander, Rimrock Principal-Mr. Jonathan Waterlander submitted his resignation as Rimrock Principal, effective at the end of his contract in June 2026.

MOTION: Trustee Merrick made a motion to approve the resignation of Jonathan Waterlander. Trustee Eldridge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Comments: Trustee Boren expressed that Mr. Waterlander is the best principal he has ever seen and thanked him for his dedication, noting that students have greatly benefited from his leadership.

Vice Chairman Merrick stated it has been a pleasure working with Mr. Waterlander.

Chairman McNeley thanked Mr. Waterlander for his contributions and service to the district.

E. Approve to advertise Principal/Superintendent with ISBA for the 2026-2027 School year

MOTION: Trustee Boren made a motion to advertise Principal/Superintendent with ISBA for 2026-2027. Trustee Merrick provided the second.

Discussion- Dr. Higbee suggested that, given the size of the district, the position should be a combined Superintendent/Principal role. He reported that he had reached out to other districts of similar size, and this was their recommended approach. Chairman McNeley emphasized the need for a thorough search, with a timeline to advertise the position immediately and make a selection by the March or April board meeting.

Motion Amendment

The maker of the original motion proposed an amendment to advertise the position with ISBA for Option 1 pricing \$3,750.

Approval

The original motion, as amended, passed. Trustee Merrick provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Approve Merrick Diesel Solutions bill

MOTION: Trustee Boren made a motion to approve the Merrick Diesel Solutions bill. Trustee Eldridge provided the second. The motion passed unanimously. Trustee Merrick left the meeting room and abstained from voting. Trustee Merrick returned to the meeting.

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Evaluation

Discussion was held regarding the upcoming Interim Superintendent evaluation. It was decided that the evaluation will be conducted at the April board meeting and finalized at the May board meeting. The evaluation format will be provided to Dr. Higbee.

ISBA Legislative Representative Program

The Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) Legislative Representative Program is designed to engage interested school board members in the legislative session. Trustee Boren volunteered to serve as the district's point of contact for legislative matters.

Day on the Hill

Trustee Mathews expressed interest in attending the Day on the Hill event scheduled for February 16–17, 2026.

ISBA Training

Board discussion on ISBA training concluded that training needs will be determined after completion of the board self-assessment.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Trustee Boren moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Trustee Merrick provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.



CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEE
January 13, 2026



CLERK/TREASURER