

OFFICIAL MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
VALTS BOARD OF EDUCATION

The regular meeting of the Valley Alternative Learning and Transitioning School Board of Education (VALTS BOE) was called to order by Board President, Brad Helgerson on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 12:12 PM at the Harms Center, 2620 College Park, Scottsbluff, NE. Meeting notice was published in the Star-Herald on June 5, 2025.

Mr. Helgerson referenced the Nebraska Open Meetings Act as posted and noted that the Board reserves the right to rearrange the order of the agenda and to convene an executive session in accordance with §84-1410.

Present: Brad Helgerson, Paul Pieper, Greg Trautman. Present via Video Conference: Brenda Smith.

Absent: John Maser, Tracy Wiese

Moved by Pieper, seconded by Trautman, that absent Board members Maser and Wiese be excused. Aye: Helgerson, Pieper, Smith, Trautman. Nay: None. Absent: Maser, Wiese. Motion passed.

Moved by Trautman, seconded by Pieper, that the agenda be approved as listed. Aye: Helgerson, Pieper, Smith, Trautman. Nay: None. Absent: Maser, Wiese. Motion passed.

Moved by Pieper, seconded by Smith, that the consent action items (Minutes of March meeting and Third Quarter Billing) be approved as listed. Aye: Helgerson, Pieper, Smith, Trautman. Nay: None. Absent: Maser, Wiese. Motion passed.

Public Forum: None

Reports:

- Administrator's Report:
  - Mr. Peacock informed the board that 10 students graduated from the program on May 14th, 2025. The graduation numbers are totaled at 22 students for the 2024-2025 school year and 791 students since the beginning of the program.
  - Summer school began on May 27th, 2025 with students attending in person and via Zoom. Fifty two students are enrolled in Math, 51 in English and 39 in Science. Students are from several of the ESU 13 member districts. The courses offered are for credit recovery purposes. The funding for summer school comes from the NEVA (Nebraska Educational Virtual Academy) program. Twenty out of 21 ESU 13 member districts contribute funds to the NEVA program.

- VALTS students, alongside members of Panhandle Blocks, produced two quilts and presented them to two separate Veterans at the Western Nebraska Veterans Home.
  - Derek Peil is the new Director of Alternative Education at ESU 13. Derek is coming from an alternative school in Wyoming. His contract begins August 1st, 2025.
  - The VALTS Board will have new members from Mitchell, Morrill and Bridgeport. The names of the individuals have not been confirmed yet.
  - There have been several changes to the student handbook for the 2025-2026 school year. Peacock specifically mentioned the AI Student Agreement, different wording in existing policies, electronic devices in accordance with the state of Nebraska, metal detector was added to the Searches, Seizures and Arrests section, and student and parent signatures of forms.
  - The 2025-2026 includes a proposed seat increase from \$8,000 to \$8,500. A loss of seats contributed to the increase. For the program to be fully funded, the seats would need to be \$10,530. The ESU 13 administration does not want to increase the seat cost to that amount. For the 2025-2026 school year, ESU 13 will use other funds to cover the deficit rather than increasing the amount to \$10,530. There are 28 planned seats for the 2025-2026 school year with an additional \$4,000 from additional seats that are not included in the Inter-Local Agreement. The program also receives distant learning funds for providing zoom courses during the school year and summer school. VALTS Science teacher, Cassandra Behnke, was a teacher of record for the 2024-2025 school year for Hyannis Area Schools.
- Future VALTS Board meeting dates:
    - September 9th, 2025
    - December 9th, 2025
    - March 10th, 2026
  - Board Member Comments-
    - Brad Helgerson discussed concerns about decreased participation in the program.
    - Greg Trautman inquired about the VALTS academic calendar about whether or not it is similar to the other school districts. Trautman explained Gering Public Schools plan for their own alternative education program. There may be a change in location for the Gering alternative education program.
    - Brenda Smith informed the Board that Sidney Public Schools is developing their own alternative education program. The district would like to have an in person program for their students. The VALTS/Sidney students currently do distant learning from a location in the ESU 13 Sidney Location.
    - Helgerson, Pieper, Smith and Trautman all thanked Tom Peacock for his time as the ESU 13 Alternative Education Director and VALTS Principal.

- Helgerson, Pieper, Trautman, Peacock and Dr. Laura Barrett all thanked Brenda Smith for her time spent serving on the VALTS Board of Education.
- Other comments: Dr. Laura Barrett discussed ways to increase revenue for the VALTS program as well as different funding structures available. Dr. Barrett informed the Board that she and Derek Peil will continue to look for ways to provide the most cost effective and quality education for the VALTS program with the goal of having a self-sustaining program.

Business:

Moved by Pieper, seconded by Smith that the Board approve the proposed VALTS 2025-2026 Academic Calendar. Aye: Helgerson, Pieper, Smith, Trautman. Nay: None. Absent: Maser, Wiese. Motion passed.

Moved by Trautman, seconded by Pieper, that the Board approve the proposed VALTS 2025-2026 Student Handbook. Aye: Helgerson, Pieper, Smith, Trautman. Nay: None. Absent: Maser, Wiese. Motion passed.

Moved by Pieper, seconded by Trautman, that the Board approve the proposed VALTS 2025-2026 Budget in the amount of \$294,834. Aye: Helgerson, Pieper, Smith, Trautman. Nay: None. Absent: Maser, Wiese. Motion passed.

Adjourn

With nothing further to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 PM.