

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 Vice President, BJ Peters on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 12:10 PM at the Harms Center, 2620 College Park, Scottsbluff, NE. Meeting notice was published in the Star-Herald on December 5, 2024.

Mr. Peters 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: John Maser, BJ Peters, Paul Pieper, Tracy Wiese. Present via Video Conference: Brenda Smith

Absent: Brad Helgerson, Kathy Nienhueser.

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

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

Moved by Maser, seconded by Pieper, that the consent action items be approved as listed. Aye: Peters, Smith, Wiese. Nay: None. Absent: Helgerson, Nienhueser. Motion passed.

Public Forum: None

Reports:

- Teacher Report: Lesley Billingsley
  - Lesley Billingsley introduced herself to the Board as the VALTS English/Language Arts teachers. Billingsley informed the Board of the volunteer opportunities the VALTS students have been involved in throughout the community. Some of the opportunities include Shopping for Seniors, The Weekend Backpack Program/Catpacks and Puppacks, and setting up for holiday events at Legacy of the Plains Museum. Billingsley stated that volunteer opportunities help students who come from school districts that require community service hours as part of their graduation requirements. Billingsley stated that VALTS students represent themselves very well while volunteering in the community.
  - Billingsley spoke about her English/Language Arts curriculum this school year. The curriculum has included media literacy, career readiness and novel studies.

Billingsley informed the Board that she has not had many issues with students misusing AI this school year.

- Student Report: Alyah Castano
  - Alyah Castano introduced herself as a senior from Bridgeport Public Schools. Castano stated that she was nervous when she first became a student at VALTS last school year, but quickly started to like the program. Castano stated that the VALTS teachers have been friendly and supportive even during difficult times she had last school year. Castano has plans to work after finishing at VALTS this month, then would like to pursue a real estate career and move to Texas. When asked why VALTS has been a better fit for her, she stated that the students get along with each other and it is a much quieter environment. Castano added that teachers at VALTS help students get somewhere including steps to get into college.
- Administrator's Report:
  - Mr. Peacock informed the Board that VALTS students received CERT Training from Bob Hessler
  - VALTS students have received visits from other people including Lissa Eureste and Jessica Brumbaugh from WNCC as well as Andrew Hunzeker from Education Quest.
  - Students participated in the Aulick Industries event in October this year.
  - 2nd Quarter VALTS Graduation will be held on December 17th, 2024 at 11:45 AM in the PLEX Room due to construction on the other side of the building.
  - Peacock has plans to move the students back to the original classrooms by Fall of 2025. The ESU 13 maintenance crew is doing a great job revamping the classrooms, hallway and offices with new carpet and paint.
  - Creek Valley Public Schools is planning to fill their seat at VALTS with a new student for 2nd semester.
  - Mitchell Public Schools currently has 2 open seats at VALTS.
  - Sidney Public Schools has mentioned dropping to 1 seat for the 25-26 school year. However, they may keep 4 seats for the 25-26 school year.
  - Gering Public Schools may drop from 10 seats to 5 seats starting at the 25-26 school year. Peacock informed the Board that if Gering drops 5 seats and Sidney drops 3 seats for the 25-26 school year, that will be a \$64,000 loss for the VALTS program. Peacock stated that there have been conversations regarding ways to make up for the \$64,000 loss.
  - Peacock has a meeting with the principals of ESU 13 Member Districts on 1/16/25.
  - VALTS is considering a daily schedule change. The schedule change would match up with the other ESU 13 student programs as well as the bell schedules for member districts who participate in VALTS. The possible schedule changes may also help with lowering the amount of daily tardies.
  - Peacock stated there will need to be a future discussion regarding reorganization of the board due to seat changes.
- Future VALTS Board meeting dates

- March 11th, 2025
- June 10th, 2025
- September 9th, 2025
- Board member comments
  - BJ Peters: Peters stated the importance of advocating for the VALTS program when considering lowering seats. Peters stated that VALTS is a hybrid program offering in person and online courses. Peters stated that it's been rewarding seeing the VALTS program on a daily basis.
  - Brenda Smith: Smith stated the experience for the Sidney VALTS students is different due to the remote learning environment instead of in person classes in Scottsbluff.
  - Tracy Wiese: Wiese stated that the VALTS Board Members who are also Gering Board Members are in a difficult position in regards to Gering Public Schools lowering their seat count at VALTS. Wiese asked what would happen to current students who have not graduated yet, if Gering lowers their seat count. Wiese inquired about ways to lower the cost of VALTS seats, including having VALTS in a different location.
  - John Maser: Maser inquired about other school districts in the ESU 13 area acquiring seats at VALTS. Maser stated that VALTS is a great program due to small classroom size and other benefits.
- Other comments:
  - Dr. Laura Barrett informed the VALTS Board that ESU 13 understands budget issues in the school districts. Barrett stated that ESU 13 will look at the situation creatively to help find solutions.
  - Tom Peacock: Peacock thanked BJ Peters for his time served on the VALTS BOE. Peacock expressed appreciation for Peters and acknowledged his unique perspective of the program.

Business: none

Adjourn

With nothing further to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 12:57 PM