

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNIT NO 16  
314 WEST FIRST STREET  
OGALLALA NE 69153-0915  
(308) 284-8481  
JAMES MCGOWN, ADMINISTRATOR

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**Ogallala Central Office  
Regular Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, March 17, 2026  
12:30 PM CT**

Legal Notice of the REGULAR BOARD MEETING was published in the Keith County News, North Platte Telegraph and on the Educational Service Unit 16 web page, [www.esu16.org](http://www.esu16.org).

The meeting was opened at 12:30 p.m. CT by Robert Jones, President of the Board of Educational Service Unit 16. Roll Call was taken and those present were:

Julie Boettcher (District 1):	Present
Bill Eakins (District 10):	Present
John Frates (District 11):	Present
Eileen Ohm (District 12):	Present
Jason Axthelm (District 2):	Absent
Bill McGahan (District 3):	Present
Robert Jones (District 4):	Present
Cheryl Bales (District 5):	Present
Grant Creager (District 6):	Present
Sherry Polk (District 7):	Present
Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8):	Present
Judy Seger (District 9):	Present

- 1) This agenda contains a list of subjects known at the time of its distribution on March 10, 2026. A copy of the agenda reflecting any changes will be available for public inspection during normal business hours in the office of the Administrator of Educational Service Unit 16. Except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda will not be enlarged later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting. The public meetings law (84-1410) allows boards to go into executive session "if a closed session is clearly necessary for the protection of the public interest or for the protection of needless injury to the reputation of an individual." Individuals attending this meeting are invited to make comments during the "Recognition of Visitors" time allowed under agenda item 4. Time for each speaker should not exceed 5 minutes.
- 2) Call to Order
  - 2)a Pledge of Allegiance
  - 2)b Roll Call
  - 2)c Board Meeting Attendance

A motion was made by John Frates (District 11) and Judy Seger (District 9) to record, in the minutes, an excused absence for Jason Axthelm. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0  
Motion Carried.
  - 2)d Notification of Open Meetings Law Posting and Recognition of Recordings
  - 2)e Legal Notice of Regular Board Meeting
- 3) Consent Agenda:

- 3)a Approval of Agenda (*Motion and second, Board President reads Conflict of Interest Statement*)  
 Approval of Minutes of the prior month Board Meeting  
 Approval of Excess Federal Rates Report  
 Approval of Claims and Financial Report  
 Authorize Payment of Claims per Article III, Section 5A  
 A motion was made by Bill McGahan (District 3) and Eileen Ohm (District 12) to approve the Consent Agenda including: the Minutes of the February Board Meeting as written and sent to Board Members; the Excess of Federal Rates Report; Financial Reports for February, the claims for March, and the mid month claims. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 4) Treasurer's Report  
 A motion was made by Cheryl Bales (District 5) and Bill Eakins (District 10) to approve the February 2026 treasurer's report including the check register as presented by Amber Lutz. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 5) Recognition of Visitors
- 6) Action Items
- 6)a Consider Approval for Serving as Fiscal Agent for Keith County C4K  
 A motion was made by John Frates (District 11) and Judy Seger (District 9) to approve ESU 16 serving as a Fiscal Agent for Keith County Communities for Kids (Keith County C4K) for the 2026-27 school year. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)b Consider Approval of updating Network Operations Interim Director title to Director  
 A motion was made by Bill McGahan (District 3) and Cheryl Bales (District 5) to approve the removal of Interim on Chad DeWester's job title for the 2026-27 school year. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)c Consider Approval of SLP Contract with Leann Carruthers  
 A motion was made by Cheryl Bales (District 5) and Grant Creager (District 6) to offer a 1.0 FTE Speech Language Pathologist contract in the amount of \$75,004.16 to Leann Carruthers for the 2026-27 school year. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)d Consider Approval of SLP Contract with Caitlin Jarosz  
 A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Bill Eakins (District 10) to offer a 1.0 FTE Speech Language Pathologist contract in the amount of \$49,434.56 to Caitlin Jarosz for the 2026-27 school year. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)e Consider Approval MOU Addendum - Literacy Program with ESUCC  
 A motion was made by Cheryl Bales (District 5) and Judy Seger (District 9) to approve the MOU between ESUCC & ESU 16 for literacy coaching and training funds. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)f Consider Approval to purchase Laptop Computers for the Special Education Staff  
 A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Eileen Ohm (District 12) accept the Proposal as presented for purchase of Laptop Computers for the Special Education Staff. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)g Approval of Staff Resignation(s)  
 A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Cheryl Bales (District 5) to accept, "with regret", the resignation of School Psychologist, Shalee Pollard. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 7) Discussion Items
- 7)a Discuss updates to Supervisory, Exempt and Classified/Non Exempt Salaries for 2026-27  
 A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Grant Creager (District 6) to move discussion item "Discuss updates to Supervisory, Exempt and Classified/Non Exempt Salaries for 2026-27" to an action item. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Sherry Polk (District 7) to authorize a \$2,500 retention incentive for School Psychologists contingent upon signing their 2026-27 contracts. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 11, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.

- 7)b Discuss 2026-27 Physical Therapy Contract
- 7)c Discuss 2026-27 Occupational Therapy Contract
- 7)d 2026-2027 Board Meeting Calendar
- 7)e First Reading of Proposed Policy Changes to Article 3 Services and Operations
- 7)f Update on Ogallala Warehouse Roof Project
- 8) Director Reports
  - 8)a Special Services: Jennifer Pohlson
  - 8)b Teaching & Learning: Alison Smith
  - 8)c Network Operations: Chad DeWester
- 9) Administrative Reports
  - 9)a Board Reports
  - 9)b Administrator's Report
  - 9)c Out of Unit Travel and Mileage Reports
- 10) Adjourn

**Michelle Walker**  
Recording Secretary

Signature of Board Officers

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Board President

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Board Secretary