

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, April 21, 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):	Present
Bill McGahan (District 3):	Absent
Robert Jones (District 4):	Present
Cheryl Bales (District 5):	Present
Grant Creager (District 6):	Absent
Sherry Polk (District 7):	Absent
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 April 14, 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 Cheryl Bales (District 5) to record, in the minutes, an excused absence for Grant Creager & Sherry Polk and/or an unexcused absence for Bill McGahan. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, 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 John Frates (District 11) and Eileen Ohm (District 12) to approve the Consent Agenda including: the Minutes of the March Board Meeting as written and sent to Board Members; the Excess of Federal Rates Report; Financial Reports for March, the claims for March, and the mid month claims. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 4) Treasurer's Report  
A motion was made by Eileen Ohm (District 12) and Judy Seger (District 9) to approve the March 2026 treasurer's report including the check register as presented by Amber Lutz. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 5) Recognition of Visitors
- 6) Action Items
- 6)a Consider Approval of Service Agreement with North Platte Public Schools  
A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Eileen Ohm (District 12) to approve the Service Agreement for North Platte Public Schools for the 2026-27 school year and to authorize the Administrator to sign the agreement. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)b Approval of and Authorization to Sign Special Education and Mental Wellness Team District Contracts for the 2026-27 School Year  
A motion was made by Judy Seger (District 9) and Jason Axthelm (District 2) to approve the 2026-2027 school district Special Education and Mental Health contracts and to authorize the Administrator to sign the corresponding SPED/Mental Health agreements. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)c Approval of and Authorization to Sign Southwest Nebraska Distance Education Network Contracts for the 2026-27 School Year  
A motion was made by Cheryl Bales (District 5) and Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) to approve the school district contracts and to authorize the Administrator to sign all 2026-27 Southwest Nebraska Distance Education Network contracts. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)d Consider Approval of Board Calendar  
A motion was made by Bill Eakins (District 10) and Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) to adopt the 2026-27 Board Meeting calendar that states dates, times and locations of the regular board meetings for the 2026-27 school year. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)e Consider Approval of Title IA Contracts  
A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Eileen Ohm (District 12) to approve the 2026-27 Title IA Contracts with school districts and authorize the Administrator to sign the corresponding agreements. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)f Consider approval of 2026-27 Physical Therapy Contract  
A motion was made by Cheryl Bales (District 5) and John Frates (District 11) to approve the 2026-27 Physical Therapy contract in the amount of \$173,252. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)g Consider approval 2026-27 Occupational Therapy Contract  
A motion was made by Judy Seger (District 9) and Cheryl Bales (District 5) to approve the 2026-27 Occupational Therapy contract in the amount of \$424,700. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.
- 6)h Second Reading of Proposed Policy Changes to Article 3 Services and Operations

A motion was made by Cheryl Bales (District 5) and Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) to adopt Policy Changes to Article 3 Services and Operations as presented and to repeal and rescind all existing Board policies that pertain to the same matters or that are otherwise conflicting, including without limitation existing policies. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.

6)j Action on Continuing and Amended Certified Staff Contracts for 2026-27

A motion was made by John Frates (District 11) and Cheryl Bales (District 5) to tender certified staff contracts for the 2026-2027 school year as recommended by the Administration. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.

6)j Approval of Staff Resignation(s)

A motion was made by Cheryl Bales (District 5) and Eileen Ohm (District 12) to accept, "with regret", the resignation of Admin Assistant, Sara Spratt & LIMHP, Jamie Meismer. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.

6)k Consider Approval of Student Service/Data Coordinator Contract with Brandy Buscher

A motion was made by Judy Seger (District 9) and Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) to offer a 1.0 FTE Student Service/ Data Coordinator contract in the amount of \$106,133 to Brandy Buscher for the 2026-27 school year. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.

6)l Consider approval of Zoom Invoice (using RUS Grant)

A motion was made by Margaret "Sooky" Marks (District 8) and Eileen Ohm (District 12) to consider approval of paying the Zoom invoice in the amount of \$160,857.75 using the RUS Grant. Roll Call Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0 Motion Carried.

7) Discussion Items

7)a Discuss Memorandum of Understanding with ESU 15

7)b Review Draft 1 of Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

7)c Annual Director Evaluations

7)d Update on the Ogallala roofing 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