

WPSDForward Task Force Community Report June 11, 2025

Executive Summary

The WPSD Task force, a grassroots initiative, has been convened over several months to provide feedback to the Woodland Park School District (WPSD) community, school board, and leadership. With 31 active members from an initial 44, the task force reflects diverse perspectives, including supporters and critics of the school board, management, and Merit Academy Charter School. Despite differing ideologies, members-maintained professionalism, collaborating by consensus to prioritize student outcomes.

Meetings were held at the Park State Bank & Trust Board Room, with materials vetted and published on <https://wpsdforward.org>. As a community-driven effort without formal authority, the task force aims to educate stakeholders—students, parents, teachers, and staff—through transparent information.

A primary concern is the perceived lack of open communication, clear public reporting in past school board and superintendent decisions, eroding community trust. To address, the task force proposes action plans, including a **critical focus** of a thorough Superintendent Search. This process must be rigorous, transparent, and inclusive, incorporating community feedback, clear qualification criteria (e.g., ethics, financial oversight, community engagement), and robust vetting to select a leader who can unify the district, address challenges like deferred maintenance and budget constraints, and rebuild trust. The taskforce's guidance for the search firm emphasizes these priorities to ensure the best candidate for students and stakeholders.

The task force has compiled a list of questions with the concept that we must first understand what questions to ask. We believe the school board and superintendent should make a real effort to answer the questions as a starting point to devise strategic plans to help us heal and move forward.

Additionally, the task force offers aspirational job descriptions for superintendents and board members, strategies to enhance communication, and a comprehensive list of questions for the board on curriculum, governance, finance, and student well-being.

The questions aim to foster strategic decision-making. By sharing this information, the task force seeks to inspire community involvement, encourage qualified school board candidates for November, and promote civil discourse. The goal is to improve educational outcomes and restore unity, keeping students first.

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***Input for the Consultant: Superintendent Search for Woodland Park School District RE-2**

Objective

To collaborate with the consultant to recruit, evaluate, and appoint a highly qualified superintendent for Woodland Park School District RE-2, aligning with the district's action plan (dated March 10, 2025) to improve student outcomes, restore community trust, and ensure legal and fiscal compliance.

District Context

- **Size:** Approximately 2,000 students.
- **Budget:** Over \$25-30 million annually.
- **Challenges:** Recent lack of clear public accountability concerns (CPR News, 2023), need for academic improvement, and community engagement.
- **Legal Requirements:** Compliance with Colorado statutes (e.g., C.R.S. 22-32-108) and district policies.

Input for Consultant Services by Phase

Phase I: Planning and Criteria Development

Action Plan Alignment: Pre-Planning Phase (Weeks 1-4)

- **Search Committee:** Form a diverse committee (school board members, teachers, parents, a high school senior, community member) led by the School Board President (Mick Bates). Consultant to facilitate committee formation and mission statement development by Week 1.
- **Job Description:** Draft a job posting with qualifications (e.g., Colorado Type D certificate, 5+ years administrative experience) and responsibilities (e.g., budget oversight, policy implementation). Consultant to use CDE certification guidelines and prior district job descriptions, delivering an approved posting by Week 3.
- **Compensation Parameters:** Assist the district in setting a competitive salary range (\$120,000-\$150,000, based on district size).
- **Timeline:** Establish a 20-week search timeline, with key milestones (e.g., recruitment by Week 5, finalist selection by Week 16).
- **Deliverables:** Committee roster, mission statement, approved job posting, and timeline.

Phase II: Recruitment and Stakeholder Input

Action Plan Alignment: Recruitment Phase (Weeks 5-10)

- **Advertising:** Post the vacancy on the district website (wpsdk12.org), CDE job board, national platforms (e.g., EdWeek), and local media (e.g., Pikes Peak Courier).
Consultant to develop a promotional brochure highlighting district demographics, selection criteria, and application procedures.
- **Community Input:** Conduct town halls or virtual forums (Weeks 6-7) at venues like Woodland Park High School or via Zoom to gather stakeholder priorities (e.g., transparency, student focus). Consultant to summarize input for the district.
- **Application Process:** Develop a tailored application form and manage a 6-week application window (Weeks 5-10) via the district's HR portal.
Actively recruit candidates meeting district needs.
- **Deliverables:** Published job listing, stakeholder input summary, compiled applicant list (target: 10+ qualified applicants).

Phase III: Screening and Initial Evaluation

Action Plan Alignment: Screening and Selection Phase (Weeks 11-16)

- **Initial Screening:** Review applications against job criteria, shortlisting 5-10 candidates (Weeks 11-12). Consultant to create rubric based on district qualifications.
- **First-Round Interviews:** Facilitate virtual or in-person interviews (Weeks 13-14) focusing on leadership vision and experience. Provide interview questions and an interview schedule.
- **Background Checks:** Conduct reference checks, internet searches, and verify credentials (Week 15) for semifinalists (3-5 candidates).
- **Deliverables:** Shortlist, semifinalist list, verification reports.

Phase IV: Finalist Selection and Community Engagement

Action Plan Alignment: Screening and Selection Phase (Weeks 11-16) and Decision Phase (Weeks 17-20)

- **Finalist Selection:** Assist in selecting 2-3 finalists and coordinate public forums (Week 16) for finalists to present and answer questions. Arrange livestreaming and moderator.

- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Provide a process for community and stakeholder groups to submit input on finalists.
- **Final Interviews:** Support in-depth board interviews (Week 17) in executive session (per C.R.S. 24-6-402). Coordinate candidate visits to the district.
- **Deliverables:** Finalist feedback summary, interview schedules, visitation arrangements.

Phase V: Onboarding and Performance Objectives

Action Plan Alignment: Decision Phase (Weeks 17-20) and Evaluation Phase (Months 6- 12)

- **Contract Negotiation:** Advise on contract terms and salary negotiation (Weeks 18- 19), ensuring alignment with district budget and CASB sample contracts.
- **Onboarding:** Support public announcement and onboarding (Week 20), including staff and community introductions.
- **Performance Goals:** Facilitate a meeting within 4 months of the superintendent's start to set measurable objectives (e.g., student achievement, budget management) by Month 6.
- **Guarantee:** Ensure the two-year guarantee applies, repeating the search if the superintendent leaves within this period, provided the district meets contract terms.
- **Deliverables:** Signed contract, announcement, onboarding schedule, performance agreement.

Additional Input

- **Community Engagement:** Emphasize improved communication to address past concerns. Host multiple forums and ensure stakeholder feedback shapes candidate selection.
- **Budget:** Allocate \$15,000-\$30,000 for search expenses (advertising, background checks, forums, consultant fees). Consultant fees are \$7,500, with a not-to-exceed amount of \$9,700, plus expenses (e.g., \$125/candidate for background checks, \$50/applicant for video interviews).
- **Success Metrics:**
 - Process: 10+ qualified applicants, process completed within 20 weeks.

- Candidate: Superintendent meets all qualifications, earns >70% community approval at meet-and-greet.
- Impact: First-year review (Month 12) shows progress in academic performance and stakeholder trust (>60% approval).
- **Contingency Plans:**
 - Low applicant turnout: Extend deadline, expand advertising, or adjust qualifications.
 - Community resistance: Increase forums or delay final vote.
 - Candidate declines: Offer to next finalist or reopen search.
 - Legal issues: Consult CASB or CDE for compliance.

Timeline Summary

- **Weeks 1-4:** Form committee, define job posting, set timeline.
- **Weeks 5-10:** Advertise, collect applications, gather community input.
- **Weeks 11-16:** Screen applicants, conduct interviews, select finalists, host forums.
- **Weeks 17-20:** Final interviews, negotiate contract, announce hire, onboard.
- **Months 6-12:** Set performance goals, conduct first-year review.

Resources

- **District:** School board, HR staff, communications officer, legal counsel, venues (e.g., Woodland Park High School), HR portal, survey software.
- **Consultant:** Application forms, promotional materials, interview questions, background check services, stakeholder feedback processes.

Contact

- **District Representative:** School Board President, Mick Bates.
- **Consultant Representative:** Authorized Representative of the search firm.

This input ensures the consultant's services align with Woodland Park's action plan, prioritizing community engagement, legal compliance, and a rigorous selection process.

***Action Plan: Hiring a School Superintendent for Woodland Park School District RE-2 Objective**

To recruit, evaluate, and appoint a highly qualified superintendent who can lead the Woodland Park School District RE-2 effectively, improve student outcomes, restore community trust, and manage district operations within legal and fiscal constraints as of March 10, 2025.

Goals

1. **Leadership Fit:** Select a candidate with proven educational leadership skills suited to Woodland Park's size (approx. 2,000 students) and challenges.
 2. **Community Engagement:** Ensure the process reflects stakeholder input, addressing past communication concerns.
 3. **Educational Excellence:** Hire a superintendent capable of advancing academic performance and aligning with Colorado Academic Standards.
 4. **Financial and Operational Stability:** Choose a leader who can manage a \$20 million+ budget and oversee facilities and staff effectively.
 5. **Legal Compliance:** Adhere to Colorado statutes (e.g., C.R.S. 22-32-108) and district policies for hiring.
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Components and Steps

1. Pre-Planning Phase (Weeks 1–4)

Purpose: Establish the foundation for a structured hiring process.

- **Step 1.1: Form a Search Committee**

- **Action:** Appoint a diverse committee including school board members, teachers, parents, a student representative (e.g., high school senior), and a community member.
- **Responsible Party:** School Board President (currently Mick Bates).
- **Timeline:** Week 1.
- **Resources:** Board meeting time, district email for outreach.

- **Deliverable:** Committee roster and mission statement.
 - **Step 1.2: Define Job Description and Qualifications**
 - **Action:** Draft a job posting detailing responsibilities (e.g., budget oversight, policy implementation) and required qualifications (e.g., Colorado Type D certificate, 5+ years administrative experience).
 - **Responsible Party:** Search Committee, with HR input.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 2–3.
 - **Resources:** CDE certification guidelines, prior superintendent job descriptions.
 - **Deliverable:** Approved job posting.
 - **Step 1.3: Engage a Search Firm (Optional)**
 - **Action:** Decide whether to hire a professional firm (e.g., Colorado Association of School Boards, CASB) for recruitment support.
 - **Responsible Party:** School Board.
 - **Timeline:** Week 4.
 - **Resources:** District budget (\$10,000–\$20,000 est.), CASB contacts.
 - **Deliverable:** Contract with firm or decision to proceed internally.
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2. Recruitment Phase (Weeks 5–10)

Purpose: Attract a strong pool of candidates.

- **Step 2.1: Post and Advertise the Position**
 - **Action:** Share the job listing on district website (wpsdk12.org), CDE job board, national education sites (e.g., EdWeek), and local media (e.g., Pikes Peak Courier).
 - **Responsible Party:** District Communications Officer and Search Committee.
 - **Timeline:** Week 5.

- **Resources:** Advertising budget (\$1,000–\$2,000), online platforms.
 - **Deliverable:** Published job listing.
 - **Step 2.2: Conduct Community Input Sessions**
 - **Action:** Host town halls or virtual forums to gather desired superintendent traits from stakeholders.
 - **Responsible Party:** Search Committee and Communications Officer.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 6–7.
 - **Resources:** Venue (e.g., Woodland Park High School), Zoom, promotional flyers.
 - **Deliverable:** Summary of community priorities (e.g., communication, student focus).
 - **Step 2.3: Application Collection**
 - **Action:** Accept applications (résumés, cover letters, references) with a firm deadline.
 - **Responsible Party:** HR Department or Search Firm.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 5–10 (6-week window).
 - **Resources:** Application portal (e.g., district HR software).
 - **Deliverable:** Compiled applicant list.
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3. Screening and Selection Phase (Weeks

11–16) Purpose: Narrow candidates and identify the best fit.

- **Step 3.1: Initial Screening**
 - **Action:** Review applications against qualifications, shortlisting 5–10 candidates.
 - **Responsible Party:** Search Committee, with HR/Search Firm support.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 11–12.

- **Resources:** Rubric based on job criteria, applicant files.
 - **Metrics:** Number of qualified applicants (target: 10+).
 - **Deliverable:** Shortlist of candidates.
 - **Step 3.2: Conduct First-Round Interviews**
 - **Action:** Hold virtual or in-person interviews with shortlisted candidates, focusing on leadership vision and experience.
 - **Responsible Party:** Search Committee.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 13–14.
 - **Resources:** Interview questions, Zoom or district office space.
 - **Deliverable:** Top 3–5 semifinalists.
 - **Step 3.3: Background and Reference Checks**
 - **Action:** Verify credentials, employment history, and contact references.
 - **Responsible Party:** HR Department or Search Firm.
 - **Timeline:** Week 15.
 - **Resources:** Background check service (\$500–\$1,000), phone/email access.
 - **Deliverable:** Verification report.
 - **Step 3.4: Finalist Selection and Community Meet-and-Greet**
 - **Action:** Select 2–3 finalists; host public forums for finalists to present and answer questions.
 - **Responsible Party:** Search Committee and School Board.
 - **Timeline:** Week 16.
 - **Resources:** Venue, livestream, moderator.
 - **Deliverable:** Finalist feedback summary.
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4. Decision and Hiring Phase (Weeks 17–20)

Purpose: Finalize the hire and onboard the superintendent.

- **Step 4.1: Final Interviews and Board Deliberation**

- **Action:** Conduct in-depth interviews with finalists; board discussions in executive session (per C.R.S. 24-6-402 for personnel matters).
- **Responsible Party:** School Board.
- **Timeline:** Week 17.
- **Resources:** Interview panel, legal counsel presence.
- **Deliverable:** Ranked finalists.

- **Step 4.2: Negotiate Contract**

- **Action:** Offer the position, negotiate salary (est. \$120,000–\$150,000 based on district size), and draft contract.
- **Responsible Party:** School Board President and Legal Counsel.
- **Timeline:** Weeks 18–19.
- **Resources:** Sample contracts from CASB, budget allocation.
- **Deliverable:** Signed contract.

- **Step 4.3: Announce and Onboard**

- **Action:** Publicly announce the hire; begin onboarding with district staff and community introductions.
 - **Responsible Party:** Communications Officer and Board.
 - **Timeline:** Week 20.
 - **Resources:** Press release, orientation materials.
 - **Deliverable:** Announcement and onboarding schedule.
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5. Evaluation Phase (Months 6–12 Post-Hire)

Purpose: Assess the superintendent's initial impact.

- **Step 5.1: Set Performance Goals**
 - **Action:** Establish measurable objectives (e.g., student achievement, budget management) with the new superintendent.
 - **Responsible Party:** School Board and Superintendent.
 - **Timeline:** Month 6.
 - **Resources:** District strategic plan, CDE metrics.
 - **Deliverable:** Performance agreement.
 - **Step 5.2: Conduct First-Year Review**
 - **Action:** Evaluate progress via board assessment and community feedback.
 - **Responsible Party:** School Board.
 - **Timeline:** Month 12.
 - **Resources:** Surveys, performance data.
 - **Metrics:** Stakeholder approval (>60%), academic growth.
 - **Deliverable:** Evaluation report.
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Resources Needed

- **Personnel:** School board, HR staff, search committee, legal counsel, optional search firm.
- **Financial:** Budget for advertising, background checks, forums, firm (est. \$15,000–\$30,000 total).
- **Tools:** CDE resources, district website, survey software, meeting spaces.

Success Metrics

- **Process:** 10+ qualified applicants; process completed within 20 weeks.
- **Candidate:** Hired superintendent meets all qualifications and earns >70% community approval at meet-and-greet.
- **Impact:** First-year review shows progress in academic and trust metrics.

Contingency Plans

- **Few Applicants:** Extend deadline, broaden advertising (e.g., national search), or adjust qualifications.
 - **Community Resistance:** Increase forums, delay final vote for more input, or reconsider finalists.
 - **Candidate Declines:** Offer to next-ranked finalist or reopen search.
 - **Legal Issues:** Consult CASB or CDE for compliance guidance.
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Timeline Summary

- **Weeks 1–4:** Pre-planning (committee, job description).
 - **Weeks 5–10:** Recruitment (posting, community input).
 - **Weeks 11–16:** Screening/selection (interviews, finalists).
 - **Weeks 17–20:** Decision/hiring (contract, onboarding).
 - **Months 6–12:** Evaluation (performance review).
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This plan ensures a thorough, inclusive process tailored to Woodland Park's context, leveraging Colorado's local control model and addressing its recent challenges (e.g., clear public reporting issues noted in CPR News, 2023).

***Superintendent Job Description - Woodland Park School District**

Overview

The Woodland Park School District (WPSD), serving students in Woodland Park, Colorado, seeks an exceptional Superintendent to lead with integrity, clear public reporting, and a commitment to educational excellence. Amid recent controversies, including curriculum disputes, high staff turnover, and a lack of clear reporting under the previous superintendent, this role requires a leader who can rebuild trust, unify a divided community, and restore stability. The Superintendent is the chief executive officer, responsible for implementing the school board's vision, managing district operations, and fostering a culture of collaboration and student success.

Key Responsibilities

- **Strategic Leadership:** Develop and execute a strategic plan aligned with the board's goals, prioritizing academic excellence, equity, and community engagement in a district with a \$28.58 million budget.
- **Policy Implementation:** Translate board policies into actionable programs, ensuring compliance with Colorado state standards and addressing community concerns about curriculum and governance.
- **Fiscal Management:** Oversee the district's budget, restoring critical funding (e.g., \$1.2 million mental health grants) and ensuring fiscal responsibility to support student and staff needs.
- **Staff Recruitment and Retention:** Address the 35-40% staff turnover rate by fostering a supportive work environment, valuing teacher input, and implementing retention strategies.
- **Community Engagement:** Act as the district's primary spokesperson, rebuilding trust through transparent communication with parents, staff, students, and the 8,000 residents of Woodland Park.
- **Curriculum Oversight:** Champion a rigorous, inclusive, and state-aligned curriculum, moving away from controversial standards like American Birthright to ensure college and career readiness.
- **Communication and Accountability:** Maintain open communication, comply with Colorado Open Meetings Law, and avoid practices like gag orders that stifled teacher voices under prior leadership.
- **Crisis Management:** Navigate ongoing lawsuits, community divisions, and public distrust with diplomacy, fostering reconciliation and consensus.

Desired Attributes

Given the current challenges, including a polarized community, legal disputes, and a legacy of opaque leadership, the following attributes are essential:

- **Ethical Leadership and Integrity:** Demonstrates honesty, fairness, and a commitment to serving all stakeholders, avoiding the secrecy that characterized the previous superintendent's tenure.
- **Transparency and Open Communication:** Committed to sharing decisions, rationales, and processes openly, engaging the community in meaningful dialogue to rebuild trust.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Skilled in mediating conflicts, listening to diverse perspectives, and fostering unity among board members, staff, and residents.
- **Proven Educational Expertise:** Deep knowledge of curriculum development, instructional best practices, and school finance, with a track record of improving student outcomes and staff morale.
- **Crisis Leadership:** Experience managing controversies, such as curriculum disputes or public backlash, with calm, reasoned judgment to stabilize the district.
- **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion:** Advocates for all students, including marginalized groups, and prioritizes mental health services and inclusive policies.
- **Community Connection:** Understands or is willing to immerse in Woodland Park's unique culture, building relationships with local stakeholders to address local needs.
- **Change Management:** Capable of leading systemic changes to reverse declining enrollment, restore staff confidence, and align district practices with best-in-class standards.

Qualifications

- Master's degree in education administration, educational leadership, or a related field (doctorate preferred).
- Valid Colorado Superintendent License or eligibility to obtain one.
- Minimum of 5-7 years of senior-level administrative experience in education, preferably as a superintendent or assistant superintendent in a similar-sized district.
- Demonstrated success in managing budgets, improving student achievement, and leading community engagement initiatives.
- Experience in a politically or socially complex environment, with a proven ability to navigate controversy and build consensus.
- No record of ethical violations or practices that undermine fiduciary responsibility, such as those associated with the previous superintendent.

Time Commitment and Compensation

- Full-time position requires flexibility to attend evening board meetings, community events, and respond to district needs.

- **Compensation:** Competitive salary (\$150,000-\$200,000 annually, based on experience) plus benefits, aligned with Colorado superintendent benchmarks for districts of similar sizes.
- **Reports to the WPSD School Board.**

Current Context and Needs

The Woodland Park School District faces significant challenges that the new Superintendent must address:

- **Community Distrust:** The previous superintendent's lack of clear public communication, including unannounced policy changes and gag orders on teachers, led to protests, lawsuits, and community division. The new leader must prioritize open governance and public engagement.
- **Staff Turnover:** A 35-40% staff departure rate, particularly at the high school, reflects low morale and dissatisfaction. The Superintendent must implement strategies to retain and empower educators.
- **Curriculum Controversy:** Adoption of the American Birthright curriculum, rejected by the state, has raised concerns about academic rigor and ideological bias. The Superintendent must restore a state-aligned, inclusive curriculum.
- **Mental Health Funding:** The decision to decline \$1.2 million in mental health grants has impacted student well-being. The Superintendent must advocate for reinstating these resources.
- **Legal and Compliance Issues:** Alleged violations of open meetings laws and ongoing lawsuits require a leader who ensures legal compliance and transparent decision-making.
- **Declining Enrollment:** Enrollment drops (down 4% since 2020) signal community dissatisfaction. The Superintendent must address root causes to stabilize and grow student numbers.

Evaluation Criteria for Candidates

The school board and community can use the following to assess candidates:

- **Public Communication Plan:** Does the candidate articulate a clear strategy for open communication and public involvement?
- **Track Record of Success:** Has the candidate improved student outcomes, staff retention, and community trust in prior roles?
- **Crisis Management Experience:** Can the candidate demonstrate success in navigating controversies or divided communities?
- **Commitment to Students and Staff:** Does the candidate prioritize mental health, equity, and teacher empowerment?
- **Alignment with Best Practices:** Does the candidate's vision align with recommendations from the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) and national standards?

Application Process

- Submit a resume, cover letter, and references to the WPSD School Board by [insert deadline, e.g., July 1, 2025].
- Candidates must address how they will tackle Woodland Park's specific challenges, including clear public communication, staff retention, and community healing.
- Finalists will participate in public forums to engage with stakeholders, ensuring community input in the selection process.

Conclusion

The Woodland Park School District Superintendent role is a pivotal opportunity to lead with integrity, restore trust, and prioritize student success in a community facing significant challenges. The ideal candidate will combine educational expertise, transparent leadership, and a collaborative spirit to unify stakeholders and rebuild a district known for excellence. This job description, informed by best practices from the Colorado Association of School Executives and tailored to Woodland Park's unique context, serves as a guide for selecting a transformative leader.

***School Board Member Job Description - Woodland Park School District Overview**

The Woodland Park School District (WPSD) seeks dedicated, community-focused individuals to serve as School Board Members. Considering recent controversies, including curriculum disputes, public communication issues, and significant staff turnover, this role demands exceptional leadership, integrity, and commitment to restoring trust and fostering inclusive education. Board Members are elected officials responsible for governing the district, setting policies, and ensuring the academic, financial, and operational success of WPSD's schools, serving approximately 2,010 students.

Key Responsibilities

- **Policy Development:** Establish and review policies that promote excellence alignment with state standards while addressing community concerns.
- **Fiscal Oversight:** Approve and monitor the district's \$25-30 million budget, ensuring responsible allocation of resources, including reinstatement of critical funding such as the \$1.2 million mental health grants.
- **Superintendent Evaluation:** Hire, evaluate, and collaborate with the superintendent to implement the board's vision, ensuring accountability and alignment with district goals.
- **Community Engagement:** Actively listen to and represent diverse a community including parents, teachers, students, and residents, to rebuild trust and improve communication.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Serve as a judicial body to resolve disputes fairly, promoting consensus and reconciliation in a polarized community.
- **Educational Advocacy:** Champion a fact-based, inclusive curriculum that prepares students for college and careers, avoiding ideological biases and compliance with Colorado state standards.
- **Communication and Compliance:** Uphold Colorado Open Meetings Law and expect that all actions are communicated, inclusive, and legally compliant.

Desired Attributes

Given the current challenges in Woodland Park, including community division, legal disputes, and a 35-40% staff turnover rate, the following attributes are critical:

- **Integrity and Ethical Leadership:** Demonstrates honesty, fairness, and a commitment to serving all students and stakeholders without personal or ideological agendas.

- **Collaborative Communication:** Skilled in listening, mediating, and building consensus among diverse groups to heal community divides and restore collegiality.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Committed to open decision-making, engaging the public, and addressing concerns about past board actions, such as unannounced policy changes.
- **Educational Expertise or Willingness to Learn:** Understands or is eager to learn about educational policy, curriculum standards, and best practices to support student achievement and teacher retention.
- **Crisis Management:** Capable of navigating controversies, such as curriculum disputes and lawsuits, with calm, reasoned judgment to stabilize the district.
- **Community Connection:** Deeply rooted in Woodland Park, with a commitment to representing the diverse needs of its 8,000 residents and fostering unity.
- **Advocacy for Mental Health and Equity:** Prioritizes student well-being by supporting mental health services and inclusive policies that address the needs of all students, including marginalized groups.

Qualifications

- At least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen, a resident of the Woodland Park School District, and a registered voter.
- No prior experience required, but candidates with backgrounds in education, finance, law, or community leadership are encouraged.
- Willingness to undergo training, as recommended by the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), to understand the role's legal and operational responsibilities.

Time Commitment

- Attend monthly board meetings, work sessions, and public forums, typically requiring 10-20 hours per month.
- Engage in ongoing community outreach and policy review, especially during the 2025 election cycle and amid ongoing lawsuits and community tensions.

Term and Election

- Serve a four-year term, with elections in November 2025 for three of five seats.
- Nonpartisan position, though candidates must navigate politicized issues with neutrality and focus on student outcomes.

Current Context and Needs

The Woodland Park School District faces significant challenges that candidates must address:

- **Community Division:** Recent board decisions, including adopting the American Birthright curriculum and limiting teacher speech, have sparked protests, lawsuits, and community distrust. Candidates must prioritize reconciliation and inclusive dialogue.
- **Staff Retention:** Nearly 40% of high school staff left after the 2022-23 school year. Candidates should support policies that value and retain educators.
- **Curriculum Integrity:** The American Birthright standards, rejected by the state, have raised concerns about academic rigor and college readiness. Candidates must advocate for a curriculum that meets state standards and prepares students for diverse futures.
- **Mental Health Support:** The decision to decline \$1.2 million in mental health funding has impacted students. Candidates should prioritize restoring these services.
- **Transparency Issues:** Alleged violations of open meetings laws and gag orders on teachers have eroded trust. Candidates must commit to transparent governance and free speech for educators.

Evaluation Criteria for Candidates

Voters and community members can use the following to assess candidates:

- **Vision for Unity:** Does the candidate articulate a plan to bridge divides and engage all stakeholders?
- **Commitment to Students:** Does the candidate prioritize academic excellence, mental health, and equity?
- **Transparency Pledge:** Does the candidate support open governance and public input?
- **Experience and Skills:** Does the candidate bring relevant expertise or a

willingness to learn?

- **Response to Controversy:** Does the candidate address past board actions with a balanced, forward-looking approach?

Conclusion

Serving as a Woodland Park School Board Member in 2025 is a critical opportunity to restore trust, stabilize the district, and prioritize student success. Candidates must embody ethical leadership, foster community unity, and champion inclusive, evidence-based education. This job description, aligned with best practices from Colorado

Association of School Boards and informed by the district's current challenges, serves as a guide for voters to select leaders who will navigate controversy with wisdom and integrity.

***Action Plan to Improve Transparency of a Public School District Goal**

Enhance public trust and accountability by ensuring the school district's operations, finances, and decision-making processes are clear, accessible, and responsive to stakeholder needs.

1. Assessing Current Transparency Baseline

- **Action:** Conduct an initial audit of existing transparency practices.
 - Review what information is currently shared (e.g., budgets, board meeting minutes, test scores).
 - Evaluate accessibility (e.g., website usability, language options, physical availability).
 - Survey stakeholders (parents, teachers, community) on their perceptions of transparency.
 - **Timeline:** 1 month.
 - **Responsible Party:** District communications team or task force subcommittee.
 - **Output:** A report identifying gaps (e.g., missing data, unclear communication) and strengths.
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2. Establish Transparency Standards and Policies

- **Action:** Develop a formal transparency policy.
 - Mandate regular public disclosure of key information: budgets, academic performance (e.g., CMAS results), staff salaries (in aggregate), and major contracts.
 - Define response times for public inquiries (e.g., 5 business days).

- Align with the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) requirements and best practices from leading districts.
 - **Timeline:** 1-2 months.
 - **Responsible Party:** School board, superintendent, and legal counsel.
 - **Output:** A written policy approved by the school board.
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3. Upgrade Communication Channels

- **Action:** Enhance platforms for sharing information.
 - **Website Overhaul:** Create a dedicated “Transparency Portal” with sections for finances, board agendas/minutes, policies, and performance data in plain language.
 - **Multilingual Access:** Translate key documents into languages prevalent in the district (e.g., Spanish, per Colorado demographics).
 - **Social media:** Use platforms like X or district accounts to announce updates and solicit feedback.
 - **Newsletter:** Launch a monthly email or print newsletter summarizing decisions and performance.
 - **Timeline:** 3-4 months for implementation.
 - **Responsible Party:** District IT team, communications officer.
 - **Output:** Functional, user-friendly communication tools with measurable usage (e.g., website visits).
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4. Increase Public Access to Decision-Making

- **Action:** Make school board and administrative processes more open.
 - Livestream and archive board meetings (e.g., via YouTube or district website).
 - Host quarterly town halls or “listening sessions” for community input on major decisions (e.g., budget cuts, school closures).

- Publish board agendas and support documents at least 7 days in advance.
 - **Timeline:** Begin within 2 months; ongoing thereafter.
 - **Responsible Party:** School board, superintendent's office.
 - **Output:** Increased attendance/participation (tracked via sign-ins or views).
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5. Simplify and Share Financial Information

- **Action:** Make financial operations transparent and digestible.
 - Publish an annual "Citizen's Budget" summarizing revenue (e.g., state funding under Colorado's School Finance Act) and expenditures in plain language with visuals (e.g., pie charts).
 - Disclose vendor contracts over a set threshold (e.g., \$25,000) in a searchable database.
 - Hold an annual budget Q&A session post-adoption.
 - **Timeline:** 2-3 months for initial rollout; annually thereafter.
 - **Responsible Party:** District finance office, communications team.
 - **Output:** Publicly available budget documents and at least 50 attendees at the Q&A.
-

6. Empower Stakeholder Feedback

- **Action:** Create mechanisms for the public to engage and hold the district accountable.
 - Launch an online feedback portal or hotline for questions, complaints, or suggestions.
 - Establish a transparency ombudsman or liaison role to address concerns and report back to the public.
 - Share how feedback influences decisions (e.g., "You said, we did" updates).
- **Timeline:** 3 months to set up; ongoing maintenance.
- **Responsible Party:** Superintendent's office, communications team.

- **Output:** A system with at least 100 submissions in the first 6 months and documented responses.
-

7. Train Staff and Leadership

- **Action:** Equip district personnel to uphold transparency.
 - Conduct workshops for administrators, board members, and staff on the transparency policy, CORA compliance, and public communication.
 - Emphasize the importance of timely, clear responses to inquiries.
 - **Timeline:** 2 months for initial training; annual refreshers.
 - **Responsible Party:** HR department, external facilitator (if needed).
 - **Output:** 90% of staff trained within the first cycle.
-

8. Monitor and Report Progress

- **Action:** Regularly evaluate and communicate transparency improvements.
 - Track metrics: website traffic, meeting attendance, feedback volume response times.
 - Publish a quarterly “Transparency Report Card” grading the district’s efforts (e.g., A-F scale) with explanations.
 - Adjust strategies based on stakeholder input and metrics.
 - **Timeline:** Begin 6 months after launch; ongoing quarterly.
 - **Responsible Party:** Designated oversight committee.
 - **Output:** Publicly available report cards of a stakeholder satisfaction survey.
-

Resource Requirements

- **Personnel:** Communications staff, IT support, finance team time, and potentially a part-time ombudsman.

- **Budget:** Estimated \$50,000-\$100,000 initially (website upgrades, training, materials), plus ongoing costs (~\$20,000/year).
 - **Tools:** Website hosting, survey software (e.g., Google Forms), livestreaming equipment.
-

Success Metrics

- Increase in public access to key documents (e.g., website downloads) within 6 months. Set target metrics.
 - Measure stakeholder approval rating on open communication in a post- implementation survey within 1 year).
 - Zero unresolved CORA violations in the first year.
 - At least 3 policy changes driven by public feedback within 12 months.
-

Risk Mitigation

- **Resistance from Leadership:** Secure buy-in from the superintendent and board by tying open communication to trust and funding support.
 - **Overload of Information:** Prioritize key data and avoid overwhelming the public with jargon or volume.
 - **Privacy Concerns:** Ensure compliance with FERPA and redact sensitive student/staff data.
-

This action plan provides a clear road map to improve open communication, balancing proactive disclosure with stakeholder engagement.

***Action Plan: Assessing the Efficacy of Selling a School District Building to a Charter School**

Objective

To evaluate whether selling a school district building to a charter school improves student outcomes, optimizes district resources, and aligns with community needs, while ensuring compliance with Colorado state laws and educational standards.

Goals

1. **Educational Impact:** Determine if the sale supports or hinders student achievement and access to quality education.
 2. **Financial Efficacy:** Assess the fiscal benefits or drawbacks for the district, including revenue, cost savings, and long-term budgetary implications.
 3. **Operational Feasibility:** Evaluate the logistical and administrative effects on district operations and the charter school's functionality.
 4. **Community Alignment:** Gauge stakeholder support and the sale's impact on community cohesion and trust.
 5. **Legal Compliance:** Ensure adherence to Colorado statutes (e.g., C.R.S. 22-32-109 for school board powers) and local policies.
-

Components and Steps

1. Pre-Assessment Phase (Weeks 1–4)

Purpose: Establish a baseline and framework for evaluation.

- **Step 1.1: Form an Assessment Task Force**
 - **Action:** Create a team including district administrators, board members, financial officers, legal counsel, and community representatives.
 - **Responsible Party:** Superintendent and School Board President.
 - **Timeline:** Week 1.
 - **Resources:** District staff time, meeting space, communication tools (e.g., Zoom).

- **Deliverable:** Task force roster and charter.
 - **Step 1.2: Define Evaluation Criteria**
 - **Action:** Develop specific metrics (e.g., student enrollment trends, cost per pupil, community survey results) based on goals.
 - **Responsible Party:** Task Force, with input from CDE guidelines.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 2–3.
 - **Resources:** Colorado Department of Education (CDE) data, district performance frameworks.
 - **Deliverable:** Written criteria document.
 - **Step 1.3: Collect Baseline Data**
 - **Action:** Gather current data on the building (e.g., usage, maintenance costs, capacity) and district/charter school demographics.
 - **Responsible Party:** District Facilities Manager and Data Analyst.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 3–4.
 - **Resources:** District records, CDE SchoolView database.
 - **Deliverable:** Baseline report.
-

2. Stakeholder Engagement Phase (Weeks 5–8)

Purpose: Ensure transparency and incorporate diverse perspectives.

- **Step 2.1: Conduct Community Forums**
 - **Action:** Host public meetings to explain the proposal and gather feedback.
 - **Responsible Party:** Task Force and Communications Officer.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 5–6.
 - **Resources:** Venue (e.g., school auditorium), promotional materials, online streaming.
 - **Deliverable:** Meeting summaries and attendance logs.

- **Step 2.2: Survey Stakeholders**

- **Action:** Distribute surveys to parents, teachers, students, and local residents on perceived benefits/drawbacks.
- **Responsible Party:** Task Force, with third-party survey support (e.g., Hanover Research).
- **Timeline:** Weeks 6–8.
- **Resources:** Survey software (e.g., Google Forms), printing costs.
- **Deliverable:** Survey results analysis.

- **Step 2.3: Consult Charter School Leadership**

- **Action:** Meet with the prospective charter school to assess their capacity and plans for the building.
 - **Responsible Party:** Superintendent and Task Force.
 - **Timeline:** Week 7.
 - **Resources:** Meeting time, charter school application/performance data.
 - **Deliverable:** Charter school capability report.
-

3. Analysis Phase (Weeks 9–14)

Purpose: Evaluate data against criteria to assess efficacy.

- **Step 3.1: Assess Educational Outcomes**

- **Action:** Compare student performance metrics (e.g., test scores, graduation rates) between district and charter schools using CDE data.
- **Responsible Party:** Data Analyst and Educational Consultant.
- **Timeline:** Weeks 9–10.
- **Resources:** CDE District Performance Frameworks, historical data.
- **Metrics:** Changes in student achievement, enrollment shifts.
- **Deliverable:** Educational impact report.

- **Step 3.2: Perform Financial Analysis**

- **Action:** Calculate sale proceeds, avoided maintenance costs, and potential loss of per-pupil funding if students transfer.
 - **Responsible Party:** Financial Officer and External Auditor.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 10–12.
 - **Resources:** District budget records, market appraisal of building.
 - **Metrics:** Net financial gain/loss over 5 years.
 - **Deliverable:** Financial impact statement.
 - **Step 3.3: Evaluate Operational Impact**
 - **Action:** Analyze effects on district facility management, transportation, and staffing.
 - **Responsible Party:** Facilities Manager and Operations Director.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 11–13.
 - **Resources:** Operational logs, staffing plans.
 - **Metrics:** Changes in operational costs, efficiency ratings.
 - **Deliverable:** Operational feasibility report.
 - **Step 3.4: Review Legal and Policy Compliance**
 - **Action:** Verify the sale aligns with C.R.S. 22-32-110 (disposal of property) and local board policies.
 - **Responsible Party:** Legal Counsel.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 12–14.
 - **Resources:** Colorado statutes, district policy manual.
 - **Deliverable:** Legal compliance checklist.
-

4. Synthesis and Decision Phase (Weeks 15–18)

Purpose: Consolidate findings and recommend a course of action.

- **Step 4.1: Compile Comprehensive Report**
 - **Action:** Integrate educational, financial, operational, and legal analyses with stakeholder feedback.

- **Responsible Party:** Task Force Coordinator.
 - **Timeline:** Weeks 15–16.
 - **Resources:** All prior deliverables, report template.
 - **Deliverable:** Draft efficacy report.
 - **Step 4.2: Present Findings to School Board**
 - **Action:** Deliver the report in a public board meeting, allowing for Q&A.
 - **Responsible Party:** Task Force and Superintendent.
 - **Timeline:** Week 17.
 - **Resources:** Presentation tools (e.g., PowerPoint), meeting space.
 - **Deliverable:** Presentation slides and minutes.
 - **Step 4.3: Board Decision**
 - **Action:** Vote on whether to proceed with the sale, modify the plan, or reject it.
 - **Responsible Party:** School Board.
 - **Timeline:** Week 18.
 - **Resources:** Board voting protocol, legal advisor presence.
 - **Deliverable:** Official board resolution.
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5. Implementation and Monitoring Phase (Months 4–12, if approved) Purpose: Execute the sale and track its efficacy post-transaction.

- **Step 5.1: Finalize Sale Agreement**
 - **Action:** Negotiate and sign a contract with the charter school.
 - **Responsible Party:** Legal Counsel and Superintendent.
 - **Timeline:** Months 4–5.
 - **Resources:** Real estate attorney, appraisal value.
 - **Deliverable:** Signed contract.
- **Step 5.2: Monitor Key Metrics**

- **Action:** Track student outcomes, financial health, and community sentiment annually.
 - **Responsible Party:** Data Analyst and Communications Officer.
 - **Timeline:** Months 6–12 (and ongoing).
 - **Resources:** CDE data, budget reports, follow-up surveys.
 - **Metrics:** Test scores, budget balance, stakeholder satisfaction rates.
 - **Deliverable:** Annual efficacy update.
-

Resources Needed

- **Personnel:** Task force members, district staff (superintendent, financial officer, facilities manager, data analyst), legal counsel, external consultants (e.g., auditor, educational expert).
- **Financial:** Budget for appraisals, surveys, community forums (est. \$10,000–\$20,000).
- **Tools:** Data analysis software, survey platforms, CDE resources, meeting facilities.

Success Metrics

- **Educational:** No significant decline in district student performance; charter school meets or exceeds state averages within 2 years.
- **Financial:** Positive net revenue or cost savings of at least 10% of building maintenance costs annually.
- **Community:** At least 60% stakeholder approval in post-sale surveys.
- **Operational:** No increase in district operational costs post-sale.

Contingency Plans

- **If Sale Fails Financially:** Lease the building to the charter school instead, retaining ownership and generating rental income.
- **If Community Opposes:** Pause the sale, conduct additional forums, and revise the proposal based on feedback.
- **If Legal Issues Arise:** Adjust terms to comply with statutes or seek CDE guidance.
- **If Educational Outcomes Drop:** Partner with the charter school for shared programs to boost performance.

Timeline Summary

- **Weeks 1–4:** Pre-assessment (data collection, criteria setting).
 - **Weeks 5–8:** Stakeholder engagement (forums, surveys).
 - **Weeks 9–14:** Analysis (educational, financial, operational, legal).
 - **Weeks 15–18:** Decision (report, board vote).
 - **Months 4–12:** Implementation/monitoring (if approved).
-

This action plan ensures a systematic, transparent evaluation, balancing immediate school district needs long-term community and student benefits. It's adaptable to Woodland Park RE-2 or any Colorado district, leveraging local control principles and CDE frameworks. Let me know if you'd like adjustments or deeper focus on a specific component!

Consolidated WPSD Taskforce Questions

Questions 01 - Curriculum and Educational Standards

1. How does the district ensure all students, regardless of background, have access to a well-rounded education, including STEAM, arts, and social studies?
2. What processes are in place to review and approve curriculum materials to ensure they are evidence-based and balanced?
3. How are concerns about the removal of books or topics from classrooms addressed, and what criteria guide these decisions?
4. What measures support critical thinking and diverse perspectives in classroom discussions, especially on controversial topics?
5. How are parents and community members involved in curriculum development or review, and what plans exist to enhance their participation?
6. How does the Core Knowledge (CKLA) curriculum meet diverse student learning needs, particularly for those struggling with its pace or scripted approach?
7. How are teachers involved in decisions to adopt new curricula like CKLA, and what training ensures effective implementation?
8. What factors guide decisions on history course requirements for graduation, and how do they ensure a robust historical education?
9. How does the district balance academic priorities with teaching life skills, such as critical thinking, to prepare students for societal contributions?

02- Governance and Transparency

10. How does the board ensure transparency and community involvement in decision-making, particularly on controversial policies or hiring practices?
11. What steps are being taken to rebuild trust with community members alienated by recent board decisions?
12. How does the board ensure all members are consistently included in discussions and decision-making, in compliance with open meeting laws?
13. How will the board strengthen its commitment to District Belief Statements through specific policies or actions to guide decision-making and rebuild trust?
14. What is the defined scope of the WPSD attorney's role, and how is it ensured that this role does not exceed legal advisory functions?

15. How is the DAC appointment process kept fair and transparent, and how are concerns about improper appointments addressed?
16. How are board meeting venues selected to accommodate public attendance, and what factors determine the use of larger spaces?

03- Finance and Resource Allocation

17. How are budget allocations prioritized to maintain educational quality and infrastructure following the rescission of the 1.09% sales tax?
18. What alternative funding sources (e.g., grants, partnerships) are being explored to offset the loss of tax revenue?
19. How are funds allocated to support teacher salaries, professional development, and student programs, and are these equitable across schools?
20. How are concerns about financial mismanagement and opaque budgeting practices being addressed?
21. What cost-saving measures are being considered, and how will they impact students and staff?
22. Can expenses be reported to differentiate between costs for educators versus administrative staff?
23. How will finances be reconfigured to meet the needs of special education students if the district exits the Pikes Peak BOCES arrangement?
24. What is the true cost to run each facility, and can corresponding budgets for reported financial years be provided?
25. What key metrics and dashboards are used to display transparency in the district's financial status and measure progress?
26. How will legal expense reporting be clearly delineated in future budgets to enhance transparency?
27. How will the 16 financial audit findings be tracked, corrected, published, and verified?
28. How will deferred maintenance costs from the 2022 facility studies be addressed, and what sustainable funding strategy will be developed?
29. How is financial data made accessible to the public in a clear, uncoded format, including detailed line items for expenses?

- 30. How are funds allocated when students, including those with special needs, switch between WPSD schools, and does funding follow the child?
- 31. Have potential cost savings from switching law firms or reducing legal services been evaluated, and what is the current annual expenditure on legal fees?
- 32. How do capital projects comply with bidding requirements and maintain transparency in contract structuring?

04- Student Well-Being and Safety

- 33. What mental health resources are available to students, and how are they promoted and accessed?
- 34. How is bullying, including incidents related to political or cultural differences, being addressed?
- 35. What safety protocols protect students and staff, and how are they evaluated or updated?
- 36. What programs ensure all students, particularly those facing unique challenges, feel supported and engaged?
- 37. How are extracurricular activities like sports and clubs supported to enhance student well-being?
- 38. Has a recent survey of facilities assessed physical environment factors (e.g., air quality, hazards), and how are findings tracked and addressed?
- 39. What is the annual expenditure on school security, and has the use of Woodland Park Police Department resources been assessed to reduce costs?

05- Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Support

- 40. What is being done to address teacher and staff turnover and improve retention, particularly for special education and WPHS coaches?
- 41. How are teachers supported with professional development to adapt to new curriculum standards or teaching challenges?
- 42. What recruitment strategies attract qualified educators, especially for specialized roles like special education or STEAM?

- 43. What feedback mechanisms allow teachers and staff to share concerns or suggestions with leadership?
- 44. How are staff salaries and benefits evaluated to remain competitive with neighboring districts?
- 45. How are staff positions and morale protected amid potential budget cuts or deferred maintenance costs?
- 46. What qualifications and evaluation processes determine which teachers are retained or released, and how are these documented?

06- Community Engagement and Communication

- 47. How are diverse community stakeholders, including those with opposing viewpoints, engaged to ensure inclusive dialogue?
- 48. How are goals, progress, and challenges communicated to parents and the community in an accessible way?
- 49. What opportunities exist for parents to collaborate with educators, such as through advisory councils?
- 50. How is division within the community, particularly around polarizing issues, being addressed?
- 51. How are BOCES services and professional development resources utilized by administrators and teachers, and how is this tracked?
- 52. What does effective communication look like, and how are real-time decisions or issues shared to involve stakeholders?

07- Equity and Inclusion

- 53. What policies or programs ensure fair opportunities for academic achievement, discipline, and resource access for all students?
- 54. How do all students, including those from varied backgrounds, access advanced courses, technology, and extracurricular activities?
- 55. What training supports staff in creating effective and positive classroom environments for all students?
- 56. What metrics evaluate progress on equity and inclusion, and how are they shared with the community?

08- Technology and Innovation

- 57. How is technology leveraged to enhance learning, especially for students with limited access to devices or internet?
- 58. What cybersecurity measures protect student and staff data amid increasing threats?
- 59. How are teachers trained to integrate technology effectively into instruction?
- 60. What innovative teaching methods or programs are being explored?
- 61. What partnerships with local businesses or organizations provide real-world learning opportunities?
- 62. Are plans in place to expand the internship program (PPBEA) to all schools and encourage community business participation?

09 - Accountability and Outcomes

- 63. What metrics evaluate student academic performance, and how are they shared with the public?
- 64. How are test scores, graduation rates, and attendance being addressed and improved?
- 65. How is the effectiveness of new policies or initiatives, such as the American Birthright curriculum, evaluated?
- 66. How are the best practices from other districts facing similar challenges adopted?
- 67. How are post-secondary outcomes (e.g., college, trade schools) tracked and improved?
- 68. How are enrollment trends, including BOCES transfers and homeschooling, tracked to support equitable resource planning?

10 - Navigating Vitriolic Information and Public Perception

- 69. How do schools share accurate, transparent information on social media and other platforms to build trust?
- 70. What lessons have been learned from other districts facing scrutiny over controversial decisions?
- 71. How are public communications assured to be factual, neutral, and focused on student outcomes?

11 - Superintendent Search

- 72. What is the full process, timeline, and criteria for hiring the next superintendent, and how will the community be involved, including public disclosure of finalist interviews and background checks.
- 73. What qualifications are prioritized in superintendent candidates (e.g., ethics, transparency, financial oversight, community engagement), and how will the ability to address deferred maintenance and polarized dynamics be assessed?

12 - School Board Election

- 74. Has the board conducted self-assessments or undergone training on governance, communication, or policy?
- 75. What are the board's priorities, and how can the public assist in the process?
- 76. How will the board improve communication and collaboration between the WPSD BOE and Merit Academy BOE?
- 77. What strategies will be implemented to retain teachers, restore mental health services, and ensure equitable resource allocation between Merit Academy and traditional WPSD schools?

13 - Operations

- 78. What are the top priorities for programs, personnel, or facilities to be implemented at district schools?
- 79. Should the district's security plan, including the use of Woodland Park Police Department Resource Officers, be reassessed?
- 80. How are program and curriculum requirements presented for annual resource review and approval?
- 81. What is the plan for utilizing the Gateway Elementary facility, and what alternatives (e.g., middle school, CTE school) were considered?
- 82. How are capacity constraints at elementary schools and the impact of busing to Summit being addressed?

14 - Stakeholder Engagement

- 83. What are the top concerns regarding staff cuts, teacher retention, facility repairs, security, and extracurricular support?
- 84. What are the top three needs (financial, personnel, facility) for each school, and how are deferred maintenance issues prioritized?

15 - Merit Academy

- 85. How is Merit Academy fostering unity and collaboration with other WPSD schools, and how are its students integrated into district-wide activities?
- 86. What services does the Merit Academy offer to special needs families, and how are its contributions to district-wide costs (e.g., transportation, administrative) determined?
- 87. What is the rationale and financial analysis for transferring a district facility to Merit Academy, and how will this impact other WPSD schools' resources and deferred maintenance funding?
- 88. What measures ensure transparent communication and community involvement in future facility decisions involving Merit Academy?

WPSD Financial Grid

Fiscal Year	Net Position	Combined Fund	General Fund	Food Service	Transportation	Total Revenues	Total Expenses
2019	(\$44,414,773)	\$9,342,363	\$9,217,601	\$95,762	\$12,275	\$25,857,303	\$22,624,529
2020	(\$37,713,180)	\$9,618,872	\$8,915,736	\$132,494	\$55,199	\$27,376,158	\$21,134,194
2021	(\$26,648,718)	\$10,996,660	\$9,988,609	\$292,720	\$166,607	\$28,550,685	\$17,486,223
2022	(\$12,872,896)	\$12,886,856	\$11,698,497	\$459,114	\$104,758	\$29,602,160	\$17,148,853
2023	(\$13,923,654)	\$10,068,059	\$8,295,518	\$310,850	\$82,662	\$29,342,183	\$30,392,941
2024	(\$14,709,989)	\$9,316,038	\$8,266,888	\$357,221	\$75,020	\$28,060,845	\$28,847,180

Fiscal Year	Total Assets	Total Liabilities	Capital Assets	Lon-Term Debt
2019	\$30,549,905	\$57,951,120	\$18,318,043	\$11,302,613
2020	\$32,471,372	\$51,370,555	\$18,583,071	\$10,882,618
2021	\$32,087,751	\$53,596,440	\$18,104,010	\$10,230,876
2022	\$34,775,408	\$39,394,280	\$19,051,119	\$9,808,203
2023	\$31,947,011	\$47,147,193	\$18,806,799	\$9,149,940
2024	\$30,118,867	\$52,079,748	\$18,030,863	\$8,600,719

WPSD Financial Notes

Notes and Explanations:

1. **Net Position (Deficit):** Reflects the government-wide net position, heavily influenced by pension and OPEB liabilities under GASB 68 and 75. The trend shows improvement from 2019 to 2022, followed by a decline in 2023 and 2024 due to increased expenses and pension adjustments.
2. **Combined Fund Balance:** Represents the total fund balance across governmental funds, with fluctuations driven by General Fund changes and strategic transfers (e.g., \$2M to Capital Projects in 2023).
3. **General Fund Balance:** The largest fund, impacted by revenue trends, expenditure levels, and transfers. The significant drop in 2023 reflects a \$2M transfer to the Capital Projects Fund.
4. **Food Service Fund Balance:** Shows growth through 2022 due to federal reimbursements (e.g., Seamless Summer Option), a decline in 2023 due to program shifts, and a slight recovery in 2024.
5. **Transportation Fund Balance:** Varies due to changes in ridership and costs, with peaks in 2021 (reduced bus usage) and declines post-pandemic.
6. **Total Revenues:** Peaked in 2022 (\$29.6M) due to federal grants and local taxes, then slightly declined in 2023 and 2024 as stimulus funds waned.
7. **Total Expenses:** Dropped significantly in 2021 and 2022 due to pandemic-related cost savings, surged in 2023 (\$30.4M) due to pension adjustments and salaries, and moderated in 2024.
8. **Total Assets:** Peaked in 2022 (\$34.8M) with capital additions, then declined due to depreciation and limited investments.
9. **Total Liabilities:** Decreased from 2019 to 2022 due to lower pension liabilities, rose in 2023 and 2024 with increased pension obligations.
10. **Capital Assets (Net):** Generally declined due to depreciation outpacing additions, with a slight increase in 2022 from investments.
11. **Long-Term Debt:** Consistently reduced through principal payments on Certificates of Participation (COPs), leases, and compensated absences.

Additional Context:

- **Audit Findings:** 2019–2023 audits were clean with no material weaknesses or compliance issues. The 2024 audit reported 16 findings, including material weaknesses in internal controls due to staff turnover, prompting corrective actions (e.g., new CFO, enhanced controls by Summer 2025).
- **Economic Factors:** Declining enrollment is a persistent challenge, offset by a 2016 sales tax (1.09%) and stable per pupil funding. The 2023 and 2024 reports note stable enrollment (1,691.5) but highlight cost pressures and limited growth potential.
- **Component Unit (Merit Academy):** Introduced in 2023 with a net position deficit of \$(1,251,252), worsening to \$(2,695,611) in 2024 due to growth-related expenses.

Fiscal Year	Net Position	General Fund	Total Revenues	Total Expenses	Total Assets	Total Liabilities	Capital Assets	Lon-Term Debt	Funded Pupils
2022	\$213,851	\$384,265	\$2,730,000	\$2,570,000	\$1,210,000	\$997,475	\$634,351	\$804,765	184.0
2023	\$(1,251,252)	\$428,234	\$4,400,000	\$5,780,000	\$861,033	\$5,584,482	\$0	\$551,521	297.5
2024	\$(2,695,611)	\$252,331	\$5,380,000	\$6,830,000	\$917,382	\$7,660,639	\$0	\$167,454	398.5

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Merit Academy Financial Notes

Notes and Explanations:

1. Net Position (Deficit):

- 2022: Positive at \$213,851 due to the school's inaugural year with no pension/OPEB liabilities under Education Re-envisioned BOCES.
- 2023: Dropped to a deficit of \$(1,251,252) after transitioning to Woodland Park School District, incurring \$4.39M in net pension liability and \$147,908 in OPEB liability from PERA participation (GASB 68 and 75).
- 2024: Further declined to \$(2,695,611), driven by increased pension liability (\$6.67M) and OPEB liability (\$161,080), despite revenue growth.

2. General Fund Balance:

- 2022: \$384,265, boosted by \$1.025M in debt proceeds for startup costs, with \$63,000 restricted for TABOR.
- 2023: Increased to \$428,234 due to revenue growth outpacing expenditures, with \$110,000 restricted for TABOR.
- 2024: Decreased to \$252,331 after a \$442,515 debt payoff, with \$152,000 restricted for TABOR.

3. Total Revenues:

- 2022: \$2.73M, primarily from per pupil revenue (\$1.98M) and grants (\$505,408).
- 2023: Rose to \$4.4M, driven by a 33.3% pupil increase (223 to 297.5) and 9th- grade addition, including \$2.72M in per pupil revenue.
- 2024: Increased to \$5.38M, reflecting a 33.9% pupil rise (297.5 to 398.5) and 10th-grade addition, with \$4.1M in per pupil revenue.

4. Total Expenses:

- 2022: \$2.57M, with 56% for instruction and 41% for supporting services, funded partly by debt.

- 2023: Jumped to \$5.78M, driven by \$1.95M in pension expense (54.5% instruction, 44.7% supporting services).
- 2024: Rose to \$6.83M, with 67.4% for instruction and significant pension costs.

5. Total Assets:

- 2022: \$1.21M, including \$576,975 in current assets and \$634,351 in capital assets.
- 2023: Dropped to \$861,033, with no capital assets (fully depreciated/disposed) and \$516,059 in cash.
- 2024: Slightly increased to \$917,382, with \$681,294 in cash and no capital assets.

6. Total Liabilities:

- 2022: \$997,475, primarily \$804,765 in long-term debt.
- 2023: Surged to \$5,584,482, including \$4.39M pension liability, \$147,908 OPEB liability, and \$551,521 in debt.
- 2024: Increased to \$7,660,639, with \$6.67M pension liability, \$161,080 OPEB liability, and \$167,454 in debt.

7. Capital Assets (Net):

- 2022: \$634,351, reflecting startup investments in facilities and equipment.
- 2023–2024: \$0, as assets were fully depreciated or disposed of.

8. Long-Term Debt:

- 2022: \$804,765, including startup loans and a \$205,125 lease liability.
- 2023: Reduced to \$551,521 after \$285,502 in repayments.
- 2024: Further decreased to \$167,454 after a \$442,263 payoff, including refinancing a TBK Bank loan via a Vectra Bank Line of Credit.

9. Funded Pupils:

- 2022: 184 students in grades K-8.
- 2023: 297.5 students, with 9th grade added.

- 2024: 398.5 students, with 10th grade added, reflecting significant growth in enrollment.

Additional Context:

- **Audit Findings:** All years (2022–2024) received unmodified opinions with no material weaknesses or compliance issues, indicating strong financial reporting.
- **Pension/OPEB Impact:** The 2023 transition to PERA significantly impacted net position, with pension liabilities rising from \$4.39M (2023) to \$6.67M (2024) and OPEB liabilities from \$147,908 to \$161,080.
- **Economic Factors:** Enrollment growth (184 to 398.5 pupils) drove revenue increases, with projections of 479 pupils for 2024-2025, including 11th grade and a new prekindergarten program. The 2016 sales tax (1.09%) and district mill levy supported revenues.
- **Budget Performance:** Positive budget variances occurred each year, with expenditures consistently under budget, though 2024 saw a larger fund balance decrease due to debt repayment.
- **Compliance:** TABOR reserves were maintained (\$63,000 in 2022, \$110,000 in 2023, \$152,000 in 2024), and commercial insurance covered risks with no significant claims.

Appendix A: Acronyms

The following table lists and defines all acronyms used in the questions posed to the Woodland Park School District (WPSD) Board of Directors and management. These definitions aim to enhance transparency and understanding for stakeholders engaging with district policies, curriculum, governance, and operations.

Acronym	Definition	Description
AP	Advanced Placement	A program by the College Board offering college-level curricula and examinations to high school students, allowing them to earn college credit.
BOCES	Board of Cooperative Educational Services	Regional educational service agencies in Colorado, such as Pikes Peak BOCES and Ute Pass BOCES, provide shared services like special education and professional development to school districts.
CFO	Chief Financial Officer	The senior executive is responsible for overseeing the financial operations and strategy of the school district.
CKLA	Core Knowledge Language Arts	A comprehensive curriculum designed to teach reading, writing, listening, and speaking while building students' knowledge in literature, history, geography, and science.
CMAS	Colorado Measures of Academic Success	Colorado's standardized assessments administered to students in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies to measure academic progress.
CTE	Career and Technical Education	Educational programs that prepare students for careers in skilled trades, applied sciences, modern technologies, and other vocational fields.
DAC	District Accountability Committee	A committee that provides input and recommendations to the WPSD school board on matters such as budget priorities, school performance, and district policies.

IEP

Individualized
Education Program

A legally binding document developed for students requiring special education, outlining specific services and accommodations to meet their unique needs.

NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association	A nonprofit organization that regulates student athletics among U.S. colleges and universities, relevant for students seeking sports scholarships.
PACE	Professional Association of Colorado Educators	A professional organization in Colorado offering resources, advocacy, and professional development for educators, noted in WPSD for providing liability insurance memberships (Support Woodland Park Schools).
PLACE	Program at Summit School	A program mentioned in the context of WPSD, likely related to education at Summit school, possibly involving place-based education, though specific details are unavailable.
PPBEA	Pikes Peak Business and Education Alliance	An organization fostering partnerships between businesses and educational institutions in the Pikes Peak region to enhance student opportunities, such as internships.
SPED	Special Education	Educational programs and services designed to meet the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, often involving IEPs or 504 Plans.
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics	An interdisciplinary educational approach integrating these five disciplines to foster critical thinking and innovation.
WPSD	Woodland Park School District	The public school district serves Woodland Park, Colorado, overseeing schools like Woodland Park High School and Summit Elementary (Woodland Park School District).
WPHS	Woodland Park High School	The public high school in Woodland Park, Colorado, offering programs like Advanced Placement and extracurricular activities (Woodland Park High School). Name has since been changed to Woodland Park Junior Senior High