NWRDC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2026

1. Roll Call/Call to Order

The February 4, 2026, meeting of the Northwest Regional Data Center NWRDC Executive Committee was called to order by Kurt Gazow at 12:31 PM.

Members

Dr. Damien Pattenaude	Chair Superintendent, Renton School District (excused)
Kurt Gazow	Chief Technology Officer, Bellingham School District
Donna Morey	Chief Financial Officer, White River School District
James Peckham	Executive Director of Finance, Lakewood School District
Nirmala Grutzius	Director of Student Information Systems, Issaquah School District

Staff & Guests

Dr. Ismael Vivanco	Northwest ESD #189, Superintendent
Lisa Matthews	Northwest ESD #189, Deputy Superintendent
Robert Pohl	NWRDC, Director
Kathy Bisig	NWRDC, Software Support Manager, Student
Mandy Bladek	NWRDC, Software Support Manager, Business
Caitlyn Smith	NWRDC, Print Shop Operations Coordinator
Elisse Clava	NWRDC, Administrative Assistant II
Erica Richards	NWRDC, Software Support Analyst I
Stacy Cook	NWRDC, Software Support Analyst I
Heather Carson	NWRDC, Project Coordinator

2. Approval of November 19, 2025 Minutes

The minutes of the November 19, 2025 Executive Committee meeting were presented for approval. Donna Morey moved, Nirmala Grutzius seconded, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried, unanimously, among those in attendance at the February 2026 meeting.

3. Report from the Director - Robert Pohl

3.1 Introduction of New Staff

Kathy Bisig introduced Erica Richards, Software Support Analyst I for Student Information Services, who previously worked at Marysville School District. Mandy Bladek introduced Stacy Cook, Software Support Analyst I for Business Information Services, who previously worked in the Riverview School District Human Resources Department. Robert Pohl introduced Heather Carson, Project Coordinator for Qmlativ Migrations, who previously worked at OSPI.

3.2 Qmlativ Migration Update

Robert Pohl presented the Qmlativ migration schedule for fiscal years 2025-26 through 2028-29. The update outlined planned migration dates for districts across each fiscal year, noting that several dates remain tentative and are dependent on district readiness and acceptance. Heather Carson was introduced as the Project Coordinator for Qmlativ Migrations and will work directly with districts to confirm timelines, coordinate resources, and support migration planning. Robert emphasized the importance of early communication and alignment to ensure adequate staffing and successful transitions as migration volume increases in future years.

3.3 Zoho Desk Analytics

Robert reviewed Zoho Desk analytics for January 5-21, 2026, noting approximately 722 new tickets. The tickets do not include any of the migration work at this point. Kathy Bisig discussed efforts by Senior Analysts to standardize ticket entry practices across Student and Business Teams.

4. Report from NWRDC Team

4.1 Student Information Services

Kathy Bisig reported that Vicki Otto has moved into a Software Support Analyst II position and will begin offering advanced training. The Student Team is supporting Enumclaw School District with Qmlativ boot camp training and exploring expanded role-based training opportunities.

The Student Support team successfully transitioned to Zoho in December. Enumclaw's final migration process begins February 10, with follow-up work for Lynden and Tukwila planned for late March. The team will deliver 50 training sessions and multiple user forums from December through March across both SMS and Qmlativ, and will send five representatives to WASWUG to present two sessions on Qmlativ Food Service and Grading.

4.2 Business Information Services

Mandy Bladek reported continued refinement of migration tools and checklists and shared that the team is exploring more role-based, targeted training models, noting that in-person training has been especially effective for engagement.

The Business Support team provided 38.25 hours of Contract Business Services to Tahoma, Blaine, and Sultan and fielded 913 total support issues between November 1 and December 31. The team successfully transitioned to the new Zoho ticketing system on December 4, and delivered December training on Qmlativ Reporting, 1099, and W-2 processes. The team is also preparing for Enumclaw's Qmlativ migration in February, with multiple support meetings scheduled each week to ensure readiness and timely assistance.

4.3 Print & Operations Services

Caitlyn Smith reported a first-quarter profit of $6,000 and approximately 100 additional print jobs, including levy and tax forms. Auburn, Edmonds and Lake Washington SD are our new clients this year. The Print Shop is also looking at pricing for new envelope printers and pressure sealers because it's approaching the end of its service life.

5. New and Pending Business – Robert Pohl

5.1 Financial Update

Robert reviewed the FY2024-25 year-end financials and shared that the organization finished the year under budget and preserved about $300,000 in fund balance. He explained that most expenses continue to be driven by salaries and benefits, and that delaying some hires and consolidating duties helped keep costs down and reduced the impact to fund balance compared to what was originally projected.

He noted that Print Shop supplies make up a large portion of the supplies budget and that the Print Shop adjusted its purchasing approach by moving to a seasonal stocking model based on need. Robert also reported that Print Shop revenue declined to about $189,000. The fund balance started the year around $3.4 million and ended just under $3.1 million. He added that the anticipated impact to fund balance was about $599,983, but the actual impact was approximately $307,720, which allowed roughly $292,263 to be preserved for future years.

Robert then provided a FY2025-26 year-to-date update for September 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. He reported that about $1.87 million has been spent, which is 29.4% of the $6.145 million budget. He shared that salaries and benefits remain the largest cost areas, and that hiring timing and delays have contributed to the current spending pace.

5.2. Forecast

Robert presented the 2026-27 forecast and shared that rising salary and benefit costs will continue to pressure the budget, and that an IPD increase is anticipated. He also explained that declining regional enrollment, projected at approximately negative 0.7 percent to negative 1.0 percent year over year, is expected to impact revenue and will require careful planning.

Robert outlined key challenges, including maintaining approximately 7.0 FTE to support migrations, building Qmlativ expertise while maintaining SMS knowledge, and responding to increasing requests for third-party integration support and advanced reporting. Additional challenges include aging Print Shop equipment, declining Print Shop revenue, and reduced staffing capacity in smaller districts due to student information coordinator positions disappearing.

Priorities for the coming year include enhancing training and support for districts migrating from SMS to Qmlativ, maintaining current staffing in the data center and Print Shop, providing additional support for Software Support Analysts, and marketing Print Shop capabilities to increase volume.

Robert also reviewed opportunities to increase revenue by centralizing third-party integration support and SMS support at NWRDC and exploring a managed student services program for smaller districts.

Robert concluded with strategy highlights: the Data Center will focus on developing integration and reporting teams, defining a post-migration organizational structure, refining the annual service agreement, and exploring managed services. Print Shop strategies include increasing client outreach, establishing a Print Shop operators community, launching an online store/web-to-print storefront, upgrading folding and sealing equipment, and implementing secure online payments with automated accounting processes to improve efficiency and revenue stability.

5.3 Membership Rates for FY2026

Robert reviewed the need for a 4% membership rate increase for FY2026, citing rising salary and benefit costs of approximately $167,000, inflationary pressures, increased operational and labor costs, and staffing required to support ongoing system migrations. He also noted declining enrollment trends, with student FTE projected to decrease by approximately one percent, resulting in an estimated $157,000 in potential revenue loss.

Robert explained that the proposed increase would allow NWRDC to maintain current service levels and staffing, including support for Qmlativ and SMS, migration work, Print Shop operations, and administrative functions. The increase would also support replacing folding and sealing equipment and implementing an online Print Shop storefront. He emphasized that multiple financial scenarios were reviewed and that the four percent increase was recommended primarily to sustain staffing and operations.

The Executive Committee discussed the proposal, including the impact of a 4% increase on the fee structure and the possibility of alternative fees. Donna Morey commented that the increase appeared reasonable. Kurt Gazow supported James Peckham's concern that the projected 1% student FTE decline may be optimistic and emphasized the importance of clearly communicating the rationale for the increase to member districts. Robert thanked the committee for the discussion and indicated he is open to providing additional information to support member understanding and decision making.

5.4 Vote on Rate Increase for FY2026

Kurt Gazow entertained a motion to approve the proposed 4.0% membership rate increase for FY2026. Donna Morey made the motion and Nirmala Grutzius seconded. The motion carried with three votes in favor from Kurt Gazow, Nirmala Grutzius, and Donna Morey, and one abstention from James Peckham.

5.5. Budget Adoption Timeline

Robert presented the budget adoption timeline and reviewed the upcoming milestones, including internal budget development and submissions to NWESD, Executive Committee review and vote in April, superintendent committee review in late April and May, publication of the legal notice, and final budget adoption by the NWESD Board of Directors in May.

6. Executive Committee Open Forum

Kurt Gazow opened the forum for additional comments and updates from members. Nirmala shared that Issaquah School District is transitioning its enrollment process to a fully online model. Robert Pohl requested a copy of the relevant board meeting minutes from James Peckham and noted he will follow up with Kurt Gazow to review related enrollment numbers.

7. Adjournment

Kurt Gazow entertained a motion to adjourn at 2:16 PM. James Peckham moved and Donna Morey seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:16 PM.

Upcoming Meetings

- April 15, 12:30-2:00 PM via Zoom
- May 20, 12:30-2:00 PM via Zoom

OFFICIAL APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Signed by:
Dr. Damien Pattenaude
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4/16/2026

NWRDC Executive Committee Chair **Date**

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Dr. Ismael Vivanco
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4/16/2026

NWESD Superintendent, NWRDC Executive Committee Secretary **Date**