



Board of Directors, Regular Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, April 16, 2019  
RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400  
BENTON COUNTY, RICHLAND, WASHINGTON

The Board of Directors of Richland School District No. 400 met for a regular meeting Tuesday, April 16, 2019, at 6:00 P.M. at Marcus Whitman Elementary, 1704 Gray Street, Richland, Washington. School Board President Rick Jansons presided. Board members present: Heather Cleary, Rick Donahoe, and Jill Oldson. Administrators present: Superintendent Rick Schulte, Successor Superintendent Nicole MacTavish, Deputy Superintendent Mike Hansen, Executive Director of Financial Services Rich Puryear, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Secondary Education Todd Baddley, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Tony Howard, Executive Director of Support Services Richard Krasner, Public Information Officer Ty Beaver, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Nicki Blake, Executive Director of Special Education Tracy Blankenship, and District Counsel Galt Pettett.

Rick Jansons called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M. and thanked all for their attendance. Mr. Jansons apologized for the poor communication and misinformation being distributed on social media and stated this information does not reflect the Board's values. He advised tonight is the first time the Board has reviewed the draft budget and talked about special education. The Board welcomes public input and will ask for comments after the Board agenda items have been presented. Speakers will be allowed three minutes and feedback sheets are available if preferred.

## **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

### **1.1 Pledge of Allegiance**

**1.2 Roll Call**-Brett Amidan was excused.

## **2.0 BUSINESS**

### **2.1 Budget**

Superintendent Schulte reviewed the draft budget document and explained since the legislature has not completed their session, the District is depending on informed estimates that will necessarily change as more information becomes available. His commitment is to show that the District has a plan for revenue and expenditures that results in an ending fund balance of 5% of expenditures, a goal set by the School Board, while protecting District programs. He explained many times budgets are not completed until August due to special sessions by the legislature. Also, many aspects of the budget are controlled by policy or contracts and are not discretionary.

Dr. Schulte advised many districts are experiencing issues as this is the first time with new standards and rules from the state. Not all districts will receive equal funding with some districts receiving \$1,000 per student while others will receive \$2,500 per student. Fortunately, the District has concluded collective bargaining with all staff so costs associated with these multi-year contracts are known. Unfortunately, the legislature is not scheduled to end the first session of the biennium until April 28. As a result of legislation passed in the last legislative session affecting wages and salaries, levy collection, and state apportionment formulas, much of the usual work in preparing a

budget has to be re-created. Many districts across the state are experiencing sometimes dramatic budget shortfalls requiring staff and operating cost reductions. Vancouver, Spokane, and Tacoma have recently been in the news for their efforts to make budget cuts ranging from \$17-\$32 million. Dr. Schulte stated he believes Richland can prepare a budget plan with the benefit of reasonable “belt tightening” for the 2019-2020 school year, while not all of the changes may be sustainable for multiple years.

Other information included:

*Enrollment.* The District will budget for 13,700 students, which is 50 fewer students than this year’s budget since the District did not reach the projected enrollment this year. The District is now at 13,550 students, about 200 students below our budgeted enrollment.

*Local Taxes.* Due to limits imposed by the legislature, the District will collect \$5.8 million less in local taxes next year.

*Administrators.* We are removing two District administrative positions by transferring those staff members to vacant building level administrative positions.

*Four-year Budget Plan.* The state now requires the District to have a 4-year budget projection. We will prepare that plan once we are further along with this year’s budget.

*Belt Tightening.* Reductions of about \$5 million have been made to expenditure plans in order to meet the ending fund balance goal include the following areas: travel, carryover, capital expenses, Classroom Support Teachers (CSTs), secondary overload, Labor and Industry (L & I) transfers, two district administrators to buildings, and teaching and learning adoption/contracts/professional development.

Dr. Schulte stated the single most widely requested item that has not been met is for Mental Health counselors at secondary schools. There is some legislation that may address this. He stated this budget is a model and will be continually updated as information is available.

Mr. Jansons stated there are no budget reasons to make any changes in special education at this time. Mr. Jansons advised he is ok with reducing the fund balance temporarily, since this budget seems to be a “worst case scenario”. Mr. Jansons also announced the Board Workshop planned for May 2, 2019, may be delayed if the legislative session is extended. This will be communicated as soon as we are notified.

## **2.2 Special Education**

Dr. Schulte advised there has been extensive controversy recently regarding the future of the special education program in the District. Some of that controversy is grounded in options debated within the District that had not yet been fully vetted or approved. Much more of that controversy seems to have been grounded in a proliferation of social media exchanges that included extensive and erroneous information. The District was thought to have a \$4-5M shortage that did not exist. The recent audit showed other matters of concern including a poor graduation rate for special education students (62%) and improvement needed in IEP writing and accountability. During the 2018-2019 school year, Deputy Superintendent Mike Hansen worked with the special education

department to develop a multi-year action plan to implement priority recommendations from the report. That action plan has not yet been presented to the Board.

In response to this widespread communication and misinformation, and recognizing the importance of special education services for our students and families, the District scheduled four evening opportunities to gather staff and family thoughts and ideas about special education programs.

Common points of controversy included:

- Will budget cuts drive program changes and reductions?
- What is the desired staffing for both certificated and classified (paraprofessional) staff?
- What are the best practices for delivering Specially Designed Instruction in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?
- What help do general education staff need to serve IEP students?
- How do we know our IEP students are receiving the services they need to succeed?

Dr. Schulte shared several recommendations including:

1. Continue the current special education programs through at least the 2019-2020 school year, with only any normal and usual incremental changes based on student needs.
2. Initiate a participatory process to determine how, why, and when to make any desired program changes. Communicate broadly, often, and through multiple methods.
3. The 1,600 students the District has with IEP's exhibit a very wide range of needs and a full continuum of services is necessary to meet those needs.
4. A short- or long-term goal for every student should include optimum independence as a self-supporting, happy and healthy adult.
5. Schedule a board workshop for further input and discussion of the special education program.

Mr. Jansons shared the protocol for public comment. Visitors are asked to sign in with their names and addresses and limit their remarks to three minutes. He explained the Board is here to listen, but this time is not meant to be a question/answer or dialogue period.

*Public Comment:*

Brandee Hogg, 1859 Birch Avenue; Lisa Corning, P.O. Box 806; Deborah Wheeler, Mark Elliott, 183 McIntosh Court; Sara Flores-Anderson, 289 Rachel Road; Nicki Sintay, 368 Temple Meadow Lane; Misty Brunner, 43807 East Mountain Place; LeeAnn Brunner, 43807 East Mountain Place; Joel Meridith, Warren Court; Jill Bio, 335 Bluekot; Theresa Munn, 2912 Redrock Ridge Loop; Miranda Donle, 1308 Sunford Avenue; Zakia Abedin, 2777 Grayhawk Loop; Sam Canterbury, 515 Delafield; Jamee McCarty, 2006 Roberdeau; Rhonda Bass, 9717 West Court Street; Colleen Mangano, 3517 Fargo; Angela Frank, 2330 Hummingbird; Molly Stegen, 1728 Howell Avenue; Kevin Winkelman, 351 Palm Drive; Tracie Winkelman (same); Mia Winkelman (same); Ann Fraser, 570 Holly; Rama Devagupta, 417 Adair Drive; Carol Chapman, 660 Cherrywood Loop; Scott McDonald, 404 Abbot Street; Annie Carlson, 1006 Thayer Drive; Sarah Griffiths, 1325 Kimball Avenue; Giuseppe Rubinaccio, 2942 Red Rock Ridge Loop; Kay Hughes, 90436 Summit View; Rebecca Petersen, 1337 Haupt; Kyystle Luttrell, 402 Abbot Street; LeeAnn Brunner, 34703 North Blackstone Court; Angie Gatherman, 1947 Pine Street; Travers Bracy, 62310 E. 99 PRSE; Kate Larsen, 1325 Marshall Avenue; Monique Maroron, 1924 Sheedan Place; Amanda Fish, 1600 Alamosa Avenue; Connie Morelock, 8309 West Falls Place; Dona Gilmour, 2403 Dover; Tonya

Olson, 106704 North Harrington Road; Mellie Hicks, 609 Millwood Court, Phyllis Baxter, 123 Sherman Street.

Concerns shared included:

- Quality paras are critical to teachers and student success, para relationships with students are invaluable, teaching staff getting burnt out-don't take paras away
- District is top heavy, look to administration to cut, need accountability from leadership, possible no confidence vote for Dr. MacTavish
- Poor communication by District
- Too much money spent on out of area professional development-create policy to spend funds in the community-use District classroom support teachers (CSTs) for trainings
- Concern for special education students being put in general education classes-teachers need professional development/training
- More education on IEPs-accountability by staff
- Want more integration/inclusion with support in classrooms
- Increase Quest program
- Create more options for 24 credit requirement
- Paras not in favor of clean slate approach-
- Full time psychologists-good idea
- Thanked board for commitment to retain special education paras

Rick Jansons stated those in attendance are here because they love their children and/or students. The District's logo is "*Educating Every Student for Success*" and the Board is morally obligated to do just that, especially for our most precious children. Mr. Jansons proposed a Special Education Task Force involving parents, paras, both special education and general education teachers, and administrators. Rick Donahoe will represent the Board on the Task Force. He asked for active participation from Richland Education Association (REA) and Public School Employees (PSE) in this process.

Rick Donahoe advised he went back to school to earn a special education degree and Rick Jansons is doing the same. He shared the need for inclusion when possible with additional support and training for general education teachers. Jill Oldson stated the Board is here to support the kids.

Mr. Jansons announced a recess at 9:25 P.M. to allow patrons to exit. He called for an executive session lasting thirty minutes with no action expected.

The meeting was reconvened at 10:05 P.M. and immediately moved to executive session to discuss qualifications of an applicant for employment or review of performance of an employee (final actions must be taken in public and discussions affecting employees generally must be held in public) 42.30.110 (1) (h). The executive session was projected to last thirty minutes, with no action expected. Executive session ended at 10:34 P.M.

The Board returned to the regular meeting at 10:34 P.M.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 P.M.

---

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400

---

SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS