

Nov. 12, 2019



Board Summary

Health Science Academy

Tim Praino, principal at Richland High School, and Assistant Superintendent Todd Baddley presented to the Richland School Board an update on the launch of the Richland Academy of Health & Sciences. Enrollment in the new program based at Richland High begins this winter and aims to help students prepare for a variety of health care careers. Mr. Praino shared an updated list of courses the program will include, how existing courses will be integrated into the program, potential equipment that could be used to engage students and support instruction and his plans to promote the program to eighth- and ninth-graders.

Special Education Task Force (SETF) Update

Mandy Cathey, Executive Director of Special Education, presented an update to the Board on the work of the Special Education Task Force that is reviewing the district's special education programs ahead of making recommendations to improve services. Mrs. Cathey and Sara Sorenson Petersen, the task force's facilitator, detailed the team building and educational work the group has done to prepare for the review and determine what is needed to best serve students. The task force will meet through the 2019-20 school year before making recommendations to the Board in June 2020. The task force will also have regular public meetings for the community to learn about its progress.

Superintendent Search Update

Board President Rick Jansons shared an update with the Board on his conversations with Hank Harris, the consultant hired by the Board to assist in finding the district's next superintendent. To meet the Board's timeline to have a new superintendent hired in March or April, while giving ample opportunity for the public to be part of the search process, Mr. Jansons said Mr. Harris requested meeting the Board soon to discuss the process and what the Board is looking for in a candidate. The Board agreed to hold a public meeting with Mr. Harris on Nov. 22 while they are attending meetings of the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) in Bellevue.

Policy No. 3211 – Gender-Inclusive Schools – First Reading

District Counsel Galt Pettett presented to the Board a new policy on gender-inclusive schools. The policy stems from a new state law that requires each school district in Washington State to adopt or amend policies and procedures that at a minimum, incorporate all the elements of a model transgender student policy and procedure that eliminates discrimination of individuals for their gender identity and expression and addresses the unique challenges and needs faced by transgender students in public schools. Mr. Pettett says the new policy codifies efforts the district already has in place in schools regarding transgender students and is consistent with training provided to staff. The Board approved the policy on its first reading and it will appear for second reading on a future consent agenda.

Staff Recognition

Assistant Superintendent Tony Howard presented a report to the Board on proposed changes to the district's staff recognition program. Mr. Howard said the changes are aimed at increasing recognition of staff while also making sure that the district's recognition program aligns with state law. A committee including Mr. Howard and other district- and school-level staff proposed expanding the district's employment longevity program to include staff who have worked for the district for at least five years and to award a yet undetermined item to staff with 25 years or more of service to the district in lieu of photographic prints previously given. Photographic prints will continue to be awarded upon retirement. The changes are not expected to increase costs to the district. Mr. Howard will bring amendments to policy resulting from the proposed changes to the Board at a future meeting.

2020-2021 School Calendar

Mr. Howard presented to the Board a draft version of the 2020-21 calendar seeking feedback. The calendar needs to be adjusted given the late Labor Day holiday delaying the start of school that year, leading to a last day of school that is too long after the traditional graduation weekend early in June to meet state requirements. Board members indicated a preference to see if the district could reschedule graduation that year to June 11.

Board Meeting Evaluation Survey

Superintendent Rick Schulte and the Board discussed a draft version of a survey for board members to evaluate the effectiveness of its meetings. The plan is to have board members complete the survey twice annually so it can be used to review and improve its meeting practices.

Next Regular Meeting: Nov. 26 @ 6:30 p.m., RSD Administration Building

Richland School District

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