



Board of Directors, Regular Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, July 28, 2020
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, July 28, 2020, at 6:30 P.M. via Zoom, Richland, Washington. School Board President Rick Jansons presided. Board members present: Heather Cleary, Rick Donahoe, Kari Williams and Jill Oldson.

The Board meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. Mr. Jansons explained the State has limited Board meetings to only discussing COVID-19 plans and updates, as well as “necessary and routine” business such as consent agenda items. This order was recently extended until August 1, 2020. He reminded all there are several ways to leave feedback for the Board including boardfeedback@rsd.edu or info@rsd.edu. Mr. Jansons explained there will be public input at this meeting and explained the process for speaking. Comments will be limited to twenty minutes and each speaker limited to three minutes, similar to in person meetings.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Roll Call-All Here

1.2 Approval of Minutes (July 14, 2020)

It was moved by Rick Donahoe and seconded by Jill Oldson that –

THE BOARD APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 14, 2020.

Vote: Cleary, yes; Donahoe, yes; Oldson, yes; Williams, yes; and Jansons, yes.

Motion was approved.

Mr. Janson stated this is Dr. Schulte’s last meeting and presented him with a memory book with letters from staff members. He thanked Dr. Schulte for his seven years of service to the District and wished him well in retirement.

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 Requests and Comments by Visitors (20-minute time limit)

Mr. Jansons advised this time is set aside for items that are not on the agenda. Time will be given near the end of the meeting for COVID-19 and the re-opening of schools.

Brandon Hoeft shared his concern with the lack of transparency in the hiring of the new superintendent. Mr. Jansons stated last fall the Board gathered information on qualities desired in a new superintendent through a District survey and email input. When Mr. Davidson withdrew his acceptance due to COVID related issues, the Board contacted the search consultant who found that Dr. Redinger, who had earlier shown interest, was available. Mr. Jansons assured all that Dr. Redinger would have been a top tier candidate had she not withdrawn her application at the time. Given the very short timeline with Dr. Schulte’s retirement looming, the interview process was started and Dr. Redinger was hired with a unanimous vote.

Sara asked when a health and safety plan will be released and stated this is needed before school begins.

Melissa F reported there was discussion earlier that mental health counselors were going to be hired. She stated many students could benefit from this. Mr. Jansons advised the District has made progress and asked for an update on a future agenda.

Gary Moskovitz stated some working actors in Hollywood are interested in doing some acting lessons or reading for elementary students. Mr. Jansons directed him to contact Dr. Redinger or Mike Hansen, Deputy Superintendent.

3.0 BUSINESS

3.1 COVID-19 Impact and Update

3.1.1 Return to School Template & Action Timeline

Dr. Redinger reminded Board members the *Return to School* template needs to be submitted, along with a Resolution, to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) two weeks before school starts (August 17, 2020). The items on the checklist are currently in the design and development phase through a number of working groups.

Mr. Jansons shared a letter to school superintendents from Benton Franklin Health District (BFHD) that was just received shortly before tonight's meeting. The letter states at this time, both Benton and Franklin Counties are well above any metrics being discussed for reopening schools. They are developing a framework to provide further guidance in the near future, but do not recommend opening schools on September 1, 2020 at this time. Mr. Jansons shared that guidance has changed the discussion the Board is having tonight. He felt it was important to start the meeting with that new information.

3.1.4 Trends on Planning for Return to School

Dr. Redinger stated as news media has been reporting, a number of larger districts in the state have already decided to begin the school year fully online, then re-assess after a given amount of time. She is not aware of many districts choosing to allow in person classes. Dr. Redinger also reported the Governor is working with the Department of Health (DOH) to develop guidelines.

Mr. Jansons asked to move to item 3.1.6 - Continuous Learning 2.0, with a decision to be made after further public comment near the end of the meeting.

3.1.6 Continuous Learning 2.0 (working document)

Mike Hansen stated of the six original options in the learning plan, several were not possible at this time. The District needs to have a fully online plan that can be put in place within 48 hours anytime during the school year in the case of worsening conditions. The information included in the online agenda was the draft as of Friday, July 25, 2020. Staff members are continually updating the document. Mr. Hansen thanked the team leads: Tracy Blankenship, Executive Director of Special Education, Todd Baddley, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, Brian Moore, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, and Nicki Blake, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum, for their work to create the Continuous Learning Plan 2.0. Each leader worked with smaller groups to develop the plan including more robust instruction and accountability for students and staff.

Board Discussion:

Ms. Williams enjoyed the formatting and feels this will really help parents to make decisions and be clear for teachers as well. She suggested that expectations be bulleted for clarity.

Ms. Oldson questioned the amount of time students will spend on zoom meetings? all day? half days? Mr. Hansen stated the schedule is broken up by levels to maximize bandwidth (first middle school, high school, then elementary). Ms. Oldson asked if the schedule could be flipped. Mr. Baddley stated this schedule seemed to fit better and is based on our current schedule with elementary students starting classes later than secondary.

Ms. Cleary liked the scheduling and formatting of the document, with classes well planned out. Mr. Baddley shared the schedule was put together by secondary principals working together.

Mr. Jansons reiterated that these are working drafts. He appreciated the focus on excellent training for teachers and paras and the more focused essential standards. We also need to be sure that all of our students have great broadband and those needing help are provided that assistance. He also appreciated the narrowing of platforms (management systems) for more consistency for students and parents. He asked that training be provided for parents as well.

Ms. Williams also stated teachers need good internet access and asked that they have access to their classrooms (along with their children) while instruction is fully online. Mr. Jansons felt teachers would be allowed in their classroom with safety procedures in place. Ms. Williams also liked the secondary “homeroom connection” concept. She expressed concern regarding the amount of time for staff professional development (PD) and suggested videos so staff could start early with this training. Mr. Hansen stated the District will be working with union groups to develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) as we need their support and clear communication.

Ms. Oldson asked how the platforms were selected. Mr. Moore advised this was mostly based off results from a staff survey showing commonly used technology. Mr. Baddley reported canvas is not a new platform and has been used for several years with training for staff already using the platform.

3.1.7 Richland Virtual School (RVS) Update (working document)

Dr. Jesse Buchholz, Director of Online Learning, stated the District is asking for a one-year commitment from families to help with planning purposes. This is also included in the District transfer policy. All RVS students will remain fully online all year, no matter what phase or model the District is in. This will provide consistency with teachers. If we start fully online, robust training will be applicable for all teachers. Courses will be added as students transfer in to accommodate those needs. He explained much time has been spent working with the special education department on special services needed. We need to provide the same standards as you would find in regular attendance, the delivery or setting just may be different. Canvas will be the management system. There will be training provided for students and parents. Ty Beaver, Communication Director, has developed the RVS pages on the District website for those wanting more information. There will also be an “Open House” type webinar July 29, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Dr. Buchholz explained thirty students have requested to transfer to RVS at this time. Teacher positions have not been posted at this time while waiting for more accurate numbers. The

information meeting will provide much more information and more students are expected after that. Board discussion followed.

3.1.8 Start of School Decision Process

Mr. Donahoe stated we all want kids back in school. Face to face learning is better for instruction, social emotional learning, and building relationships, but this is a risk management decision and we have to ask, do we put people at risk? He understands that children may get exposed and be sick for a short time, but he is concerned with students infecting others that may be older or have health risk. He has experienced a co-worker dying. He feels the Board needs to decide what criteria to meet for sending our students back to school safely.

All Board members stated they have listened or been a participant in all four of the Town Halls (6-7 hours of input) and read all of the over 200 emails sent to the Board email address. The good news is that shows people truly care. The late arrival of the Benton/Franklin Health District (BFHD) letter with the promise of a metrics for re-opening schools is overshadowing the Board's decision.

Ms. Cleary agreed that the decision is out of our hands with the recent BFHD information. She is encouraged by the work of our operations staff to get our buildings ready, but we have to wait and see what restrictions are placed and continue to encourage the community to follow safe practices, then open when the time is right.

Ms. Williams is the newest Board member and this decision is weighing heavily. She can't imagine forcing teachers to return to classroom who don't feel comfortable doing so. She has heard from many covering both ends of the spectrum, all with valid reasons for their opinions. She likes having choices and feels the District should let both staff and students return to school if they want and not come back if they don't feel comfortable doing so. Ms. Williams would like to make a choice tonight to give parents more time to prepare.

Dr. Redinger advised what we are hearing from OSPI is that we need to listen to our local health agencies. She felt it would not be prudent to go against the BFHD recommendation. The District should wait for the metrics to be provided for further direction.

Mr. Jansons said we need to have staff training for instruction fully online. Even though the state is going to give us metrics, it is safe to make the decision to go online, then optimistically, the situation may be different in six weeks and we can move to a different model later this fall. We don't have to make a critical decision tonight.

Both Mr. Donahoe and Ms. Cleary stated they would like to delay the decision for tonight since there are too many unknowns.

Ms. Oldson stated this entire process has been new for everyone. The community is in a worse situation now than we were in March when schools were closed. Kids are missing the opportunity to have a normal school experience. All teachers would like to be back in the classroom, but based on the data regarding COVID and risks involved with asymptomatic students taking the disease home to older or at-risk family members, this decision can't be taken lightly. If we send kids to school, then have to close down, this would compound the issues. Ms. Oldson is leaning towards starting school online, then evaluating frequently. Our goal is to get kids back in school. She would

like time to work with Dr. Redinger to move forward and is not comfortable making a final decision tonight.

Dr. Redinger advised she is still working with BFHD and OSPI. She also heard that the Governor may provide further direction very soon and feels the District should not get ahead of those agencies.

Ms. Cleary asked if we might receive clarification by August 17, 2020 when the Return to School template is due to OSPI. Dr. Redinger thinks there is a chance of that information coming before the deadline. She and others are engaged in weekly meetings to keep pushing for their guidance as soon as possible.

Public Comment:

Mr. Jansons explained this is a time for the public to share input, not for question/answer type dialogue.

Stephen Holmes stated he had issues with chromebooks during the spring and asked if Kindergartners and first grader would have chromebooks this year?

LaDonna Sterling stated the need to think differently this year and suggested starting the school year two weeks later.

Kiera asked if there would be any compensation for parents having to purchasing supplies for their students. He stated learning was difficult and parents had to be very diligent last spring.

JD asked if there were any plans for the Early Learning Center students. Mr. Jansons stated the BFHD did not show any differences for that program.

Benton REA asked the Board to create a plan as soon as possible to help parents plan. Concerns were shared regarding technology issues.

Nicole Mejia asked the difference between the 2.0 plan and RVS. As a counselor, she asked if RVS students are still District students needing services? She asked, before the BFHD letter, what was the board decision going to be? Mr. Jansons stated there was no lack of transparency and he had no idea what the vote would have been.

Jami Simpkin asked if teaching session could be recorded to help with parent schedules. She also asked if Early Learning Center jobs were secure.

Sarah Metcalf stated the RVS presentation was amazing. She is an elementary art teacher and shared her concern for no communication from administration as to what she will be teaching next year.

Nicole C. said she appreciates that the level of transparency in Richland is better than neighboring districts and feels like there is no good answer. She would like more information regarding the details of the hybrid plan (Model C). She shared concern about HomeLink being divided into several locations.

Rich Quadrel stated conditions will continue to change and he would appreciate setting a date for their decision to allow parents and teachers time to plan.

Kathy Preszler stated teachers really want to be back in the classroom. Some teachers are taking professional development classes on their own. If PD will be online, will staff be able to start trainings before the end of August. She stated the teachers should get a choice to come back if they want.

Melissa Callaway shared her concern that students will only be in classrooms for 45 minutes, 3 periods a day, 4 days a week. She feels the District needs to reevaluate the schedule.

Mr. Jansons asked if there was a motion.

It was moved by Rick Donahoe and seconded by Heather Cleary that –

THE BOARD APPROVE THE START OF SCHOOL TO BE FULLY ONLINE - CONTINUOUS LEARNING PLAN 2.0 OR RICHLAND VIRTUAL SCHOOL.

Board Discussion:

Ms. Williams asked to set a date when the decision will be reassessed. Mr. Jansons stated, at a minimum, this decision will be re-assessed at every Board meeting. He also believes the District will be receiving a metrics from the state shortly to guide our decision making.

Ms. Cleary asked if the Board could delay this decision to the next meeting. Mr. Jansons advised the motion would need to be rescinded.

Mr. Donahoe advised, if we receive clear guidance, the Board can call a Special Board meeting.

Ms. Williams stated she wanted parents to have a choice, but the health department letter took that opportunity away.

Ms. Oldson still has questions on accountability and involvement and how it will be distributed to parents but is ready to vote. We need solid numbers for teachers coming back in person and parents willing to send their students back to in-person classrooms. We need this information to discuss options before the next meeting. She also wants reliable information on who doesn't have internet access for online learning and additional time for professional development.

Vote: Cleary, yes; Donahoe, yes; Oldson, yes; Williams, no; and Jansons, yes.
Motion was approved.

Ms. Cleary stated she agrees with Ms. Williams about offering choices. Ms. Oldson agrees as well but can't justify putting anyone at risk. Ms. Williams stated she would only offer in person options to those who felt comfortable returning to classroom, both teachers and students. Mr. Jansons reported this is one of the hardest decisions Board members will ever make. There is no decision that will satisfy everyone. We know there are parents that are hurting.

Mr. Jansons spoke with Brian Ace, Boys/Girls Clubs of Benton/Franklin (B/GC). Mr. Ace is working with Brian Moore, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, to continue partnering with the District to access additional space if needed to provide daycare for families. Ms. Oldson stated she will work endlessly with B/GC to think outside the box for childcare options.

3.1.9 Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) Update

Todd Baddley, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, reported WIAA has moved to a four-sport season, moving football, volleyball and girls’ soccer to start on March 1, 2021. The only sport left for fall is Cross-Country, but he is awaiting updates on that at this time. He advised there is no news on marching band, dance/cheer, and choir. He reported options for middle school sports may be intramural only. The WIAA guidelines are tied to the State Phase plan. He is expecting more information soon.

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA (approval by a single vote of the Board)

It was moved by Heather Cleary and seconded by Kari Williams –

THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (4.1) THROUGH (4.3) INCLUDING A PERSONNEL ACTION UPDATE.

Vote: Cleary, yes; Donahoe, yes; Oldson, yes; Williams, yes; and Jansons, yes.
Motion was approved.

4.1 Personnel Actions

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

RESIGNATIONS FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Cathey, Mandy, Assistant Principal, Jason Lee Elementary

CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL

NEW HIRES FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21

Gilliam, Sarah, 1FTE, Kindergarten, Sacajawea Elementary

Worcester, Jenna, 1FTE, Family & Consumer Sciences, Richland High School non-continuing

Dyck, Amy, 1FTE, Counselor, Sacajawea Elementary

Adams, Alexandra, .60FTE, ELA Teacher, Leona Libby Middle School

RESIGNATIONS FOR THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

Rehn, Savannah, 1FTE, Instructional Specialist, Jason Lee Elementary

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Scott, Tasha, 1FTE, 4th, Sacajawea Elementary

CONDITIONAL/LIMITED CERTIFICATE FOR 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Snipes, Melissa, Science, Richland High School

OUT OF ENDORSEMENT FOR 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Klug, Steven, Computer Science, Carmichael Middle School

Simmelink, Ryan, German, Richland High School

Houston, Pam, Health, Carmichael Middle School

Rhoden, Charles, Elementary Education, Tapteal

Hamilton, Tessa, SPED, Early Learning Center

Devin, Mecham, German, Hanford High School

OUT OF ENDORSEMENT FOR 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR (Educator Equity Report)

Smith, Jay, Gen Ed math, 9th grade, Hanford High School

Buchkoski, Sarah, Gen Ed, gen ed student in Kindergarten SPED class, Jefferson Elementary
Cothorn, Kim, Gen Ed, gen ed student in Kindergarten SPED class, White Bluffs Elementary

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

NEW HIRES FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Benson, Tammy, Lead Secretary, Leona Libby Middle School

RESIGNATIONS FOR THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

Schertenleib, Gina, Nutrition Services, Hanford High School

RETIREMENTS FOR THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

Bradford, Melissa, Paraeducator, Marcus Whitman Elementary

Burghard, Dixie, Paraeducator, Orchard Elementary

McCann, Barbara, Secretary, Enterprise Middle School

4.2 Budget Monthly Report

4.3 Warrant Approval

ASB Fund Warrant No. 40006657 for \$8.68

Capital Projects Fund Warrant Nos. 20001500 through 20001508 for \$605,038.59

Nos. 52000167 through 52000168 for \$1,349,952.33

Nos. 20001509 through 20001512 for \$1,127,059.84

General Fund Warrant Nos. 10073479 through 10073503 for \$113,664.42

Nos. 51000926 through 51000928 for \$161,527.17

Nos. 71001776 through 71001787 for \$141,952.11

Nos. 10073561 through 10073600 for \$467,197.48

Nos. 51000929 through 51000934 for \$222,415.52

Nos. 71001788 through 71001816 for \$128,214.66

Self-Insurance Fund Warrant Nos. 70000166 through 70000167 for \$9,163.17

5.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

5.1 Possible Workshops

Mr. Jansons announce a Budget workshop is needed before the second meeting in August to review the budget before approval.

5.2 Possible Town Halls

Ms. Williams advised she enjoyed the Town Halls allowing stakeholders to share input. She asked administrators to schedule information nights to help parents understand procedures and protocols for the start of school. These would be beneficial for staff as well, the earlier the better. Ms. Williams also suggested a video showing cleaning procedures planned for families and staff.

Mr. Jansons reiterated information on tomorrow night's Richland Virtual School information night. He feels transparency is improving but needs to continue to improve since that was a goal for the Board members.

6.0 BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS

Shelley Redinger stated we had over 800 people on the zoom meeting tonight. She apologized that the letter from the BFHD came shortly before tonight's meeting, so the information just became available. She is looking forward to her move and thanked all for the warm welcome!

Jill Oldson welcomed Dr. Redinger and stated she has been participating in meetings as the District Legislative Representative and stated the District has a strong voice in Olympia.

Rick Donahoe applauded Ms. Williams for voting with her heart. He announced that he is moving to Michigan to be closer to his family and help with grandchildren. He will be resigning as of August 31, 2020. He stated how much he has enjoyed his time on the Board.

Heather Cleary welcome Dr. Redinger to the District.

Rick Jansons stated he is on committees through the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) and stated there is lots of work being done to help stabilize the next few years. He thanked Mr. Donahoe for his strong leadership and thanked him for his years of service.

Mr. Jansons stated the District will go through the normal process to find Mr. Donahoe's replacement. He thanked all for their patience through this period of difficult decision making.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 P.M.

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400

SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS