



Board of Directors, Workshop/Special Meeting Minutes, Thursday, August 13, 2020
RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400
BENTON COUNTY, RICHLAND, WASHINGTON

The Board of Directors of Richland School District No. 400 met for a workshop/special meeting Thursday, August 13, 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.

Mr. Jansons called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

1.0 Special Education Task Force

Dr. Redinger introduced Dr. Tracy Blankenship, Executive Director of Special Education. Dr. Blankenship shared the history behind the Special Education Force (SETF) and introduced Zach Carpenter and Robert Sorensen-Co Directors, Shayla DeJong-Early Learning Center (ELC) and Behavior Coordinator, and Kiley Hodges-Compliance and Professional Development (PD).

Kiley Hodges reported the data collected by Urban Collaborative during the spring of 2018 was presented in June of 2018. It identified overarching strengths and provided 18 observations, some District specific and some Special Education specific. Over 70 interviews were conducted.

Strengths included:

- staff and community passionate, knowledgeable, supportive Board members
- strong commitment to closing the achievement gap
- highly qualified staff
- district takes issues/complaints seriously

In April of 2019, the Board directed the creation of a Special Education Task Force to look at the program review and make recommendations.

Zach Carpenter reported the committee was made up of more than 30 members including teachers, administrators, community members, and a board representative (Rick Donahoe). Sarah Peterson, WSU, was hired to facilitate the group. Dr. Schulte reported to the Board on June 23, 2020 with some topics to focus on. These aligned directly with the task force recommendations. Mr. Carpenter explained Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework for implementing various levels of instruction and he described the differences between MTSS and Response to Intervention (RtI). MTSS has a much broader scope and addresses academic as well as social emotional areas, including behavior and attendance. MTSS addresses all students, not just special education students.

Mr. Sorenson advised inclusion takes steps in the right direction by including students of varying abilities in the same classroom. Inclusive practice gives all students the opportunity to learn, be supported, and be challenged regardless of ability. He went on to explain Universal Design for

Learning (UDL) is a framework to guide the design of learning environments. This framework is accessible and challenging for all with a goal to support learners to become motivated, resourceful, and goal driven. UDL aims to change the design of the environment, rather than change the learner. Mr. Donahoe explained having students with a variety of abilities in classrooms and finding ways to teach universally, removing barriers, so all students can learn.

Co-teaching is instruction in the general education setting provided by both a general education teacher and a special education teacher that incorporate specially designed instruction into teaching. Both teachers share the responsibility for the delivery of instruction, planning and progress. This is currently being utilized in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math courses at the secondary level.

The task force has given a foundation to plan forward with:

- professional development
- continue the inclusionary practices grant (Tapteal Elementary, Carmichael Middle School, and Richland High School)
- Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) Inclusionary Practices Grant for District leadership

Dr. Blankenship advised the new Teaching, Learning and Administration Center (TLAC) has an onsite learning base. A new Life Skills curriculum was adopted last year. A parent resource link was added to the website as well as a parent newsletter. Monthly informational trainings for parents are provided. There is significant emphasis on professional development for both general and special education staff. Board members asked to have regular communication at meetings, attend some trainings, or tour classrooms in the future. Mr. Donahoe also suggested a book study with Board members.

Dr. Redinger suggested a quarterly update with current progress and next steps. Board members thanked all for the presentation and their work to make improvements.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

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SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS