



Board of Directors, Regular Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, January 12, 2021  
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, January 12, 2021, at 5:30 P.M. via Zoom, West Richland, Washington. School Board President Rick Jansons presided. Board members present: Heather Cleary, Kari Williams, Jill Oldson and Ken Gosney.

The Board meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Personnel)**

The Board adjourned to executive session at 5:30 P.M. 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) (g). The executive session was projected to last sixty minutes, with no action expected. Executive session ended at 6:20 P.M.

The Board returned to the regular meeting at 6:30 P.M.

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

**1.1 Pledge of Allegiance**

**1.2 Roll Call-All Here**

**1.3 Approval of Minutes (December 8, 2020)**

Heather Cleary asked to correct the minutes to say she joined the December 8, 2020 meeting directly after the Student Advisory Committee Report.

It was moved by Heather Cleary and seconded by Ken Gosney that –

THE BOARD APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 8, 2020 INCLUDING MS. CLEARY’S ADDITION.

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

Motion was approved.

**1.4 Student Advisory Committee Report**

Mr. Jansons introduced Jade Villanueva, Richland High School student, who shared topics from the last Superintendent/Student Advisory Committee meeting including mental health and social issues. Students liked the weekly survey done by some teachers to check how students are feeling. She stated students miss having an advisory period. Students also felt teachers were uncomfortable talking about racial and social justice issues but felt those conversations were best led by students with adult supervision. She stated students felt the committee was a good place to discuss issues and were pleased with the creation of the Equity/Diversity Workgroup. Mr. Jansons thanked Ms. Villanueva for her report.

## **2.0 COMMUNICATIONS**

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

Holly Martell shared her concern that the District has been pushing students out of school and feels that some teachers are showing poor behavior. She would like to see all students back in school.

Steven Holmes shared concern regarding social distancing on busses and felt the District COVID Dashboard should be updated more frequently.

Shelly Burt stated her kindergarten student on an IEP is not doing well and feels children are being harmed.

Ben Griggs stated he sees no reason why students can't return concurrently. He is concerned about failure rates, academic achievement, and the mental health of students.

Zoe Smith is a student at Hanford High School and shared a student survey requesting students keep the same afternoon schedule for second semester. She feels a later start helps to set students up for success.

Ted Robbins enjoyed the student report and urged the Board to get kids back in school. He stated, in talking with students regarding mental health, he feels they need to be back in school as soon as possible.

Dawn Hansen was concerned about a previous comment regarding teachers' behaviors and asked that if parents have issues with a specific teacher to get in touch with the building principal. She stated she has never worked harder than in the past year and specific issues should be taken up with administrators who can deal with those teachers.

Sarah doesn't think it is helpful to demonize teachers and sees teachers working very hard. She lives in a multi-generational home and is concerned about parents who might get sick.

Tammy Stokes shared she has a senior and is concerned that online learning is not preparing her student for college. She also asked that an in-person graduation be planned for this year's seniors, possibly using Fran Rish Stadium.

## **3.0 BUSINESS**

### **3.1 Return to School Update**

#### **3.1.1 Metrics/Data-Benton Franklin Health District/State**

Mike Hansen, Deputy Superintendent, shared the Healthy Washington-Roadmap to Recovery. He shared the Governor's information is for community use, not school use. It shows the state divided into eight regions with the Tri Cities area in the South-Central Washington region. Mr. Hansen shared the Benton Franklin Health District (BFHD) data with 621 COVID cases/100,000 population over a 14-day period. He reported all staff want to see students back in school. Safety walk-throughs with Steve Bump (NV5) for secondary schools will be completed later this week. District schools have done a good job of mitigation.

### **3.1.2 Staffing Update**

Tony Howard, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, advised 35-40 substitutes have been added since December. These are split between certified subs (teachers) and paraeducators. The District has used social media to share this need and will continue to recruit staff. He shared other subs already on our sub list have reported they will return after receiving vaccines. Dedicated paraeducator subs have been assigned to buildings for principals to use where needed to add some flexibility. He is encouraged that the District is heading in the right direction. Emergency substitutes, without classroom experience, are provided training before entering classrooms.

Mr. Howard advised there are 23 high-risk staff at the secondary level who have already completed medical paperwork. There are an additional 22 that are going through the qualification process. Without completion of medical information, those staff members will be expected to be onsite. Discussion followed.

### **3.1.3 Fourth and Fifth Grade Return (January 11, 2021) Update**

Brian Moore, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, reported all fourth and fifth grade students returned to hybrid learning yesterday. Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are now back in hybrid, in-person learning. Enrollment in Continuous Digital Learning (CDL) has stabilized at about 565 students. He advised Badger Mountain Elementary and Tapteal Elementary moves will take place during spring break. The opening of the school near Belmont will begin for the 2022-2023 school year. Mr. Moore stated the lengthy boundary change process will begin this spring. The District will be asking the public for input.

Dr. Redinger reported there were 791 participants on the zoom Board meeting this evening. She clarified that a post was mistakenly put on the District website before the meeting. The post was a draft and Board members did not discuss any outcome before the Board meeting. Dr. Redinger apologized for the confusion.

### **3.1.4 Secondary Return Update\*with recommendations from Benton Franklin Health District**

Todd Baddley, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, thanked principals, administrators, and bargaining group representatives for their collaborative work on the secondary return to in-person learning plan. He explained the timeline was reviewed by local public health officials to ensure it meets their recommendations. The hybrid plan calls for the return of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (A/B hybrid) on January 27<sup>th</sup> (26<sup>th</sup> will be an asynchronous day for all). Since 6<sup>th</sup> graders have not been on a middle school campus, this will allow time to become familiar with middle school procedures. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will begin on February 2<sup>nd</sup> (A/B hybrid). 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will begin on February 17<sup>th</sup> (A/B hybrid) with grades 10-12 following on February 22<sup>nd</sup> (A/B hybrid).

Mr. Baddley advised survey results from families (60% return rate) indicated 85% of students would like to come back to on site hybrid, 12% want to stay remote with their regular teachers, and 3% would choose Richland Virtual School (RVS). High risk teachers will be able to zoom from home with paraeducators in the classroom for supervision. This would also allow quarantined students and staff to stay home during this time period. River's Edge High School students will return at the beginning of the semester to a regular schedule since staff are able to accommodate the smaller number of students.

Dr. Redinger introduced Dr. Amy Person, Benton Franklin Health District (BFHD), who shared it has been hard to navigate the landscape when the metrics continue to change. The local recommendations seemed disconnected from the state. What they have learned over time is that as long as schools continue to keep safety protocols in place, schools can be safely opened. Even with a higher disease rate in the community, the health district is not seeing a higher transmission rate in schools. Dr. Person stated case rates have dropped from their highs at the end of December and she feels students and staff can be in schools without a higher risk of infection. She has issued new recommendations to release the pause on the return of secondary students. She does feel districts should use a phased-in approach for middle school and high schools. This will allow the health district time to quickly identify close contacts and monitor COVID transmission rates.

Mr. Jansons thanked Dr. Person for her report and asked for any questions. Board discussion followed including:

- new strain of COVID? Dr. Person stated the same safety protocols should be used.
- length of pause between middle school and high school return? Dr. Person stated the health district just recommended phasing and felt it was up to districts to decide timeframes being sure there is enough time to maintain safety protocols.
- spread of COVID-remote or hybrid learning? Dr. Person said there seems to be little difference as long as safety protocols are in place.
- spread in private schools? Dr. Person stated they have not seen outbreaks, but they also have the advantage of smaller class sizes where it is easier to maintain social distance.

Dr. Redinger thanked Dr. Person for her leadership and collaboration during this period. Mr. Jansons advised Board members have reviewed the draft plan and asked for input.

Ms. Cleary questioned how classrooms would be cleaned between shifts. Mr. Baddley explained cleaning protocols including students wiping down desks, hand sanitizing stations, and touch points cleaned by custodial staff.

Mr. Jansons supports the plan set forth. He feels there will be a bump from the holidays but anticipates numbers will decrease after that. He likes the three-week window between starts which will give the health district time to monitor progress. Mr. Jansons shared he does not want to start and then have to close again. He is also pleased the state and local health districts are aligned. Mr. Bump (NV5) will be completing walk-throughs of secondary buildings to assure safety protocols are in place. This will also give time to be sure new technology is in buildings and staff have been trained. He urged parents to give teachers grace as they accommodate both students at home and in the classroom. This will also allow time for the vaccination process to begin. He likes that we are getting kids back in school and supports the plan presented.

Ms. Cleary feels the slow rollout is most important. The draft is well thought out and feels this gives staff time to problem solve as issues arise. She does not want to open and then have to close as this is hard on students and families.

Ms. Williams thanked staff for the innovative option to allow high risk teachers to work remotely, or those staff or students needing to quarantine. She also likes that 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders return earlier to learn routines and locations. She suggested having both 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students return at semester break, then having another group on February 1st (possibly 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders), with all students returning as of February 8<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Williams wants to be assured that all safety protocols are in place but feels since students are in both middle and high schools, students could return sooner.

Ms. Oldson agreed and asked Mr. Baddley to explain a “day in the life” of a student with the changes that will be needed to assure safety protocols are in place.

Mr. Gosney stated he is in support of the plan as presented and would like to hear from Mr. Baddley if Ms. Williams plan would work.

Mr. Baddley explained the proposed plan allows “all hands on deck” at the middle school when 6<sup>th</sup> graders begin including nurses, technology coaches, and help to ensure attestations have been completed. Then have all staff supporting the high schools for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade return. Students will have temperature checks during first period. Students will be seated six feet apart facing in the same direction. They will clean their desks before leaving and when they arrive at their next classroom. There will be no groupings in hallways and restrooms will not be available during breaks, only during class. Physical Education and Music will be mainly theory based with no locker room use and no instruments or vocals. Lunches will be “grab and go” with students six feet apart and assigned seating, all facing the same direction (gymnasiums will be used if needed).

Mr. Baddley reported ending the semester last schoolyear with 7% students failing and is predicting 17% at the end of this semester. Students can receive F’s (fail) or I’s (incomplete). Students are able to retrieve credits in a variety of ways if they receive an incomplete.

Ms. Oldson thanked the Board and administration for working together to make sure there are choices to fit the needs of our students. All members want to have students back in school. Ms. Oldson feels we can now begin to bring secondary students back to in-person hybrid learning safely.

It was moved by Jill Oldson and seconded by Heather Cleary –

**THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE THE SECONDARY IN-PERSON HYBRID IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AS PRESENTED WITH ALL STUDENTS RETURNING BY FEBRUARY 22, 2021.**

Mr. Jansons asked for any discussion. Ms. Cleary feels this is a balanced, slow solution that she can support. Ms. Williams would like to see students return simultaneously but values the process and feels this provides families with options.

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

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**3.2 Budget/Enrollment Update**

Clinton Sherman, Executive Director of Finance, shared enrollment trends with a huge jump in 2017-2018 which has now decreased. He explained enrollment drives District revenue and he explained the 2021-2022 budget process timeline starting now. He stated we are now 450 students below budget and a very conservative estimate will be used to begin this process. With the roll out of vaccines, enrollment may begin to increase. The Legislative Session began yesterday and decisions they make will determine the District funding. Mr. Sherman reported budget work may need to pivot at the close of the session, but he is hoping to have budget work completed to bring to the Board for adoption in June.

Mr. Jansons stated he liked the timeline presented. Board members were encouraged to meet with Mr. Sherman individually and workshops will also be scheduled.

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

Dr. Redinger explained the Highly Capable information on the Consent Agenda is needed for state compliance and she will be working with the leadership team to report in more depth at a future meeting.

It was moved by Heather Cleary and seconded by Jill Oldson –

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

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

**4.1 Personnel Actions**

CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL

NEW HIRES FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Gustin, Danielle, 1 FTE, Nurse, Special Programs, effective 1/11/2021, Non-Continuing

Sammons, Jaclyn, .50 FTE, Counselor, Wiley Elementary, effective 1/4/2021, Non-Continuing

Sizemore, Michelle, 1 FTE, Nurse, Special Programs, effective 1/11/2021, Non-Continuing

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR 2020-21 YEAR

Sande, Laine, Occupational Therapist, Special Programs, effective 1/4/2021

Schoepflin, Dawn, Language Arts, Richland High School, effective 1/4/2021

Servoss, Brenda, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, Badger Mtn. Elementary School, effective 9/1/2020

Wade, Margaret, Math, Chief Joseph Middle School, effective 1/26/2021

REASSIGNMENT FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Janosky, Rebecca, Counselor, from Hanford High School to Richland HS, effective 12/17/2020

Markel, Chandra, Counselor, from Richland HS to River's Edge High School, eff. 12/17/2020

Mason-Streifert, Karen, Instructional Specialist, from Badger Mtn. to RVS, effective 12/14/2020

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

NEW HIRES FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Green, Heather, Paraeducator, Early Learning Center, effective 12/14/2020

Macki, Allysa, Custodian, Support Services, effective 1/4/2021

Palomarez, Karla, Lead Secretary (Leave Replacement), Marcus Whitman, effective 1/4/2021

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Heeney, Sherry, Paraeducator, Chief Joseph Middle School, effective 1/9/2021

Nix, Barbie, Paraeducator, River's Edge High School, effective 1/4/2021

Younes, Anne, Paraeducator, White Bluffs Elementary, effective 1/4/2021

**REASSIGNMENTS FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR**

Palencia, Miguel, Asst. Cust. Supervisor to Custodial Supervisor, effective 12/14/2020 (temporary)

**RESIGNATIONS FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR**

Brooks, Christy, Paraeducator, William Wiley Elementary, effective 1/29/2021

Maib, Elizabeth, Paraeducator, Lewis & Clark Elementary, effective 12/31/2020

Maine, Alaina, Nutrition Services, River's Edge High School, effective 12/31/2020

**TERMINATIONS**

Morales, Marcos, Paraeducator, Badger Mountain Elementary, effective 1/11/2021

**4.2 Highly Capable Assurance**

**4.3 Payroll and Warrant Information**

ASB Fund Warrant No. 54000302 for \$16,549.52

Nos. 54000303 through 54000305 for \$6,271.49

Nos. 54000306 through 54000308 for \$284.61

Capital Projects Fund Warrant Nos. 20001562 through 20001565 for \$927,748.78

Nos. 52000199 through 52000202 for \$1,449,697.08

No. 71000025 for \$997.50

Nos. 20001566 through 20001568 for \$292,908.75

Nos. 20001569 through 20001576 for \$376,730.92

Nos. 52000203 through 52000204 for \$481,859.28

General Fund Warrant Nos. 10074857 through 10074862 for \$18,545.25

Nos. 51001076 for \$258,312.96

Nos. 10074863 through 10074929 for \$447,721.19

Nos. 51001077 through 51001092 for \$269,538.42

Nos. 71002090 through 71002105 for \$31,867.89

Nos. 10075051 through 10075145 for \$356,826.23

Nos. 51001094 through 51001101 for \$60,096.40

Nos. 71002106 through 71002125 for \$35,705.44

Self-Insurance Fund Warrant Nos. 57000025 through 57000026 for \$3,467.34

Nos. 57000027 through 57000029 for \$15,038.43

Nos. 57000030 through 57000031 for \$4,581.80

No. 70000181 for \$169.65

Payroll Warrant Nos. 10074857 for \$4,383.57

Nos. 10074930 to 10075007 for \$122,302.03

Nos. 10075008 to 10075049 for \$4,387,550.54

Electronic Fund Transfer for \$8,931,489.19

Total December Payroll approved in the amount of \$13,445,725.33

**5.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Gosney asked to hear more about the Mental Health Assistance Team work and semester information on failure rates. Dr. Redinger shared staff will begin to update the Annual Board Agenda Planning Calendar at the next Cabinet meeting.

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**6.0 BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS**

Shelley Redinger thanked Board members for their unanimous vote on the secondary schedule and congratulated staff on their collaborative effort to return students back to school.

Jill Oldson reported on the recent WSSDA legislative meetings with members from across the state. She encouraged the public to contact their legislators to advocate for additional support for mental health, drug and alcohol related issues for school districts. Ms. Oldson also reported on the recent Board Operating Principles Workshop and stated several more will be scheduled in the near future.

Dr. Redinger also reported Steve Witeck, longtime District Administrator, had passed away.

Rick Jansons thanked staff members for their hard work and dedication on the plan presented tonight. He is looking forward to the implementation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 P.M.

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RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400

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SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS