



Puget Sound Educational Service District
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Puget Sound Educational Service District Announces Six New Board Members

Renton, WA – December 10, 2021 – This summer, Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) announced six of the nine seats on the PSESD board were open for election. PSESD is excited to announce the results of the 2021 Board of Directors election and introduce its new and re-elected board members all who will be sworn into office at the January 19, 2022, school board meeting.

PSESD welcomes back **Mehret Tekle-Awarun** representing District 5 and **Barbara L. Peterson** representing District 7, both of whom won their elections and will retain their seats on the PSESD board. Additionally, PSESD has three new community members who will join the board in January 2022. PSESD is pleased to welcome **Peter Maier** who will represent District 1, **Aaron Norikane** who will represent District 3, and **Stanley Holland** who will represent District 9. PSESD also has the pleasure of welcoming back **Annie Laurie Armstrong** who previously served on the board from 2016-2019 to represent District 2.

“Guiding and supporting our agency to achieve our End, ‘Success for Each Child, and Eliminate the Opportunity Gap by Leading with Racial Equity’ is the primary duty of the PSESD board,” said John Welch, PSESD Superintendent. “I am confident our new board members help us continue to make strides in this vital work.”

Educational Service Districts (ESDs) are governed by a board of directors consisting of seven or nine citizens who are accountable to and elected by the school board members in the region’s public-school districts. The board members represent geographic director districts based on U.S. Census Bureau data. The ESD boards provide direction to their superintendent who is advised by local school district superintendents.

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New Board Members:

Peter Maier (he/him) District 1 Shoreline, Seattle (North)

Peter Maier grew up and lives in North Seattle. He has been involved in education policy for many years. "Our public schools are the bedrock of a just and equitable society. I have devoted countless volunteer hours seeking the goal that all of our students receive the education they need and deserve."

Peter served on the State Board of Education 2013-2021 (Chair, 2019-21), and was an elected member of the Seattle School Board 2008-2011. He has long fought for full funding of public schools through both ballot measures and legislation. He chaired the Seattle Public School's levy campaigns in 2004 and 2007. Peter started off this work as a PTA Dad when his children attended Seattle Public Schools.

Peter was an attorney in private practice in downtown Seattle for 39 years until his retirement in 2020. He represented individual consumers, small businesses, and nonprofits. Peter lives in Ballard with his wife, Liz, and cat, Jackson. Peter graduated from Seattle Public Schools, Oberlin College and Harvard Law School.

Annie Laurie Armstrong (she/her) District 2 Bainbridge Island, Vashon Island, Seattle (North, Central, West)

Annie Laurie Armstrong believes that public school education should be an inspiring and productive experience for all students. She brings to the PSESD Board a deep commitment to, and history of working as a partner with community members to inform and design the critical systems (education, housing, workforce, and health) that are essential to supporting strong families and vibrant communities. As founder of Business Government Community Connections (BGCC) she has worked with grassroots, tribal and community-based organizations, institutions, funders, and policymakers to tackle the institutional barriers that stand in the way of families' efforts to move from surviving to thriving. Annie Laurie has extensive direct service, and research expertise in the areas of early learning, career technical education and programs which promote successful transitions of all high school students.

Four children from Annie Laurie's family are enrolled in the Seattle Public Schools. Annie has a passion for ensuring that a high-quality education pipeline is put in place, beginning with early learning, and extending well beyond high school completion. She originally engaged in education as a Head Start assistant and has been an ardent supporter of Head Start and early learning programs ever since. She also worked in the juvenile justice system, as a tutor, employment specialist and researcher. She is currently an evaluator for multi-year diversity, equity, and inclusion focused initiatives to help young people stay in, and/or reengage in high school and prepare for next step education and careers.

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Aaron Norikane (he/him) **District 3** Issaquah, Bellevue, Mercer Island, Seattle (Central, South)

Aaron has been working to support quality youth programs in the Seattle area for over 30 years. He has been a tireless advocate for creating strong connections and supportive systems for all young people. Working as an after-school provider, program director, substitute teacher, and various other roles with youth or youth professionals has given him the utmost respect for the power of strong buffering adults in young people’s lives.

Aaron joined the Sound Discipline team in 2016. As a Facilitator, he helps educators gain tools to support and give agency to young people. He feels extremely fortunate working to stretch the perceptions of how young people are seen, and grateful to be in a profession that aligns with his values.

Aaron always thought he would be an architect or airline pilot or ideally a National Basketball Association (NBA) player as a young person. Never once did he think he would get over his intense fear of public speaking to take on a job where he facilitates workshops to audiences as big as 300 people. A lifelong Seattleite, Aaron finds his greatest source of joy in watching his two children learn, grow and giggle. His colleagues describe him as passionate, caring, and continually pushing to make our systems better. By the end of his career, Aaron hopes that he will have helped shift this community’s trajectory towards a mutually respectful place where everyone belongs and matters.

Stanley Holland (he/him) **District 9** Steilacoom, Orting, Clover Park, Franklin Pierce, Bethel, Eatonville, Carbonado, and White River

Stanley Holland is a graduate of Seattle Public Schools, where both of his parents were educators. His parents instilled in Stanley the importance of public schools and a love of education that grew into a lifelong passion. His strong belief in the advantages and opportunities a public education and its ability to afford students a strong foundation for the rest of their lives, led him to serve on the Orting School Board for eight years, seven of those years as President.

Stanley moved to Orting, Washington back when it was only farmland with just a few residents. There, he found an avenue to express his dedication to public service and was elected to the Orting City Council, where he chaired the Public Safety Committee and served as Deputy Mayor for 13 years. His work on the council focused on community planning and preparing the town for growth. When he opted not to rerun for another term, Stanley was approached by citizens of Orting asking him to bring his experience to the school board. Having watched his own children walk the school halls and attend classes in Orting schools, he knew immediately that is where he wanted to be.

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Now, Stanley brings his experience to PSES and is vested in planning and preparing for the future of students from Steilacoom, Orting, Clover Park, Franklin Pierce, Bethel, Eatonville, Carbonado and White River School Districts.

Stanley is a graduate of Seattle Pacific University with a degree in Business Administration who currently works as a Senior Facility Manager in the healthcare industry with MultiCare. He is a father, a grandfather, and a University of Washington Alumni Dad, ("Go Huskies!") When not serving the community, Stanley enjoys fishing, nature walks, and riding his motorcycle around the Passes during the summer, appreciating all the nature Washington has to offer.

Re-elected Board Members:

Mehret Tekle-Awarun (she/her) District 5 Kent, Renton, Seattle (South)

Mehret Tekle-Awarun is Senior Manager of Education Strategy at Building Changes, a statewide agency that works across systems to advance equitable responses that address housing and education crises experienced by children, youth, and families. Mehret transforms ideas into action, fostering the supportive relationships and healthy environments needed to improve student centered services for the more than 40,000 students experiencing homelessness in Washington. She has more than a decade of experience working for school districts and the nonprofit sector in South King County. Mehret is an equity-driven and highly experienced manager with a history in leading successful program development and initiatives for low income and immigrant and refugee communities' access to education and health opportunities.

Mehret currently resides in Renton with her husband and two children. Mehret grew up in a culturally rich and connected community of Southeast Seattle where she was influenced greatly by her upbringing. She is committed toward culturally responsive solutions that respect and honor the perspectives and strengths of all families and students. She believes strongly that families are experts in their children's lives, and students are experts in identifying their academic goals. An Eritrean American, Mehret works in cordial partnership with families, students, and communities that have been historically marginalized to ensure they are engaged fully in the education process and achieve education justice. Mehret relates well to the desires of educators, families, and students to be successful, having achieved success herself through the encouragement and support she received from her schools, her family, and her community.

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Barbara Peterson (she/her) District 7, Federal Way, Fife, Highline, Tukwila

Barbara Peterson, a Highline District resident for forty years, graduated from Mt. Rainier High School as did her children, Leo, and Annie O'Donnell. She received Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate degrees from the University of Washington. She is the Executive Director of Altera, an educational nonprofit that partners with rural low-income districts with many emerging language learners, providing programming for family engagement and home literacy, afterschool enrichment and postsecondary outreach programs. Barbara undertook her doctoral studies to infuse her nonprofit work and PSESD Board service with a solid basis of educational research and best practice to better support education in Washington State broadly, with a focus on King and Pierce County. She is a published author on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in rural schools and on equitable access to rigorous coursework in rural high schools.

"I represent Tukwila, Highline, Federal Way and Fife whose districts face the compelling educational challenge of the globalization of education as long-time resident families mix with an influx of refugees who bring multiple languages to our districts, challenging educators to meet our parents' high aspirations for their children. Our educational systems will change post-COVID in ways we do not yet know. The PSESD staff is equity-minded and future-focused and in partnership with our districts in King and Pierce County will contribute in significant ways to promoting a just educational system that serves all our students."

About PSESD:

[PSESD](#) is one of nine regional educational agencies serving school districts and state-approved charter and private schools in Washington. PSESD works with 35 districts in King and Pierce Counties, along with Bainbridge Island, who serve more than 433,000 students, or approximately 40 percent of the state's total K-12 population. Educational Service Districts, created by the legislature, are an essential regional delivery system for early learning, K-12, and postsecondary services in the state.

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