



**Board Work Session Minutes  
Thursday, July 27, 2023**

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The Board of Directors held a Work Session on Thursday, July 27, 2023. The meeting began at 2 pm and was held at District Office. Directors Denholm, Burchard, Olson, Cannon and Gray were present. Also attending was Superintendent Travis Hanson.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

Director Gray made a motion to approve the agenda, as presented. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**II. July 26<sup>th</sup> Community Focus Group Meeting Review/Update**

Superintendent Hanson, regarding the *Community Focus Group Meeting* that took place at Highland Middle School on the evening of July 26, 2023, shared he was very pleased with the turn-out. 150 invitations were sent with the hope 30-40 would attend. Exceeding expectations, actual attendance was 50+.

Using the *ThoughtExchange* platform, attendees provided personal responses, and feedback on the responses of others, to four questions including what the district does well and areas needing improvement. Feedback regarding the use and benefits of this interactive platform was very positive.

The meeting additionally provided the opportunity to get the upcoming Levy election process going and, in particular, solicit individuals willing to help and/or be members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee that advocates for levy passage. Sixteen individuals indicated their willingness to help.

Board members in attendance (Michael Cannon, Bob Olson & Denny Denholm) were all complimentary of the *ThoughtExchange* tool, noting it helped connect those in attendance.

**III. EP&O Levy Discussion**

Superintendent Hanson, at the *Community Focus Group Meeting*, asked those in attendance to raise their hand if they could articulate what the Levy pays for. Of the 50+ individuals present very few raised their hand. This emphasized the importance of making sure the district is very intentional and clear regarding what Levy dollars are spent on.

Discussion included the following:

- Exploring creative ways, such as a *Levy Dollar Pie Chart*, to show/explain where Levy dollars are spent.
- Review of the *Why It Matters 2018 Levy Campaign* and the possibility of using that same tagline for the upcoming election.
- Acknowledgement the community has a hard time understanding why the district needs Levy dollars.
- Importance of the school board being aligned regarding the Levy.
- Regarding messaging, the need to not over-complicate the information shared including discussion around how to label the ballot measure . . . EP&O Levy vs Enrichment Levy vs Renewal Levy vs Replacement Levy, and the need to coordinate what it is called with other regional school districts who will also be asking voters to renew levies in February.

- Regarding *levy rate*, notation the ballot does not reference a *levy rate*, but rather shows a set dollar amount for each year (2025, 2026 & 2027).
- The need to tell a compelling and transparent story regarding the “why” for the Levy.

In conclusion, Superintendent Hanson noted he has scheduled a meeting for early in the upcoming week to begin establishing a Levy timeline. The Levy is a “front burner” item for him and the district.

#### **IV. 2023/24 Board Goals Discussion**

Incorporating the top four goals identified by the board at their June 26<sup>th</sup> Work Session (EP&O Levy, Fiscal Health, Safety/Security, Public Communication), a draft *2023-24 Board Goals* document was shared. When finalized this document will be posted on the district’s website.

Recommended revisions included removal of the *Washington School Board Standards* listed at the top of the draft and, as part of the *Safety and Security* goal, the addition of an action step to review the recommendations made by the Safety Task Force (June 2019) for help in identifying where levy dollars should be allocated to address safety and security needs. Regarding the *Community Connection and Engagement* goal, the recommendation was made to refer to the levy as simply *Levy* or *Replacement Levy* rather than *EP&O Levy*.

While not a specific change to the draft document, the board noted the need to provide information to stakeholders explaining *how* and *why* various positions are staffed like they are. This should include information that compares/contrasts current staffing levels (i.e., nurses & custodians) to the state’s Prototypical School Funding Model. Additionally, many in the community do not understand the difference between *Headcount* and *FTE* and how that equates to the monies received from the state.

#### **V. Board Protocols/Operating Principles Discussion**

At the June 26<sup>th</sup> Work Session, a list of potential Board Protocols/Operating Principles was shared. At that meeting it was agreed to chunk these protocols/principles and discuss three to four of them at a time, in more detail, at future work sessions. To that end, four from the list were reviewed/discussed.

The first addressed individual board members performing their duties in accordance with their *Oath of Office*. The second asserted the board’s intent to consider research, public input and best practices/established standards in making decisions. The third stated individual board members do not have decision-making authority. Only the board as a whole has the authority to make policy decisions and take action. The topic of the fourth was “chain of command” and included a commitment from the board to encourage parents/community members to present problems or proposals to the appropriate district personnel in an appropriate forum. In this protocol it was recommended the word *challenge* be inserted in place of *problem*.

#### **VI. Public Comment (Policy 1430) Discussion**

As requested at the June 26<sup>th</sup> Work Session, a draft revision to the district’s *Public Comment* policy (1430) and draft *Guidelines for Public Comment at Board Meetings* were prepared/presented by Superintendent Hanson. The policy itself was simplified, directing individuals to the guidelines for specifics regarding Public Comment. Guidelines included the opportunity for comment on agenda items at the beginning of the meeting and comment on non-agenda items at the end of the meeting prior to adjournment. In each case individuals were required to sign-up to speak prior to the start of the meeting and provided three minutes to offer their comments. Additionally, non-agenda comments were limited to no more than five individuals.

Following review/discussion the following revisions were put forward:

- Place no restriction on the number of individuals who can address the board on non-agenda items.
- Allow those in attendance, who did not sign-up prior to the start of the meeting, the opportunity to sign-up at the conclusion of the business portion of the meeting, before opening the floor for Public Comment on non-agenda items.

The importance of communicating the board is open and eager to hear from constituents was noted. The plan is to have the policy revision and new guidelines approved and ready for implementation in September.

#### **VII. Policy & Procedure Adoption/Revision Discussion**

Superintendent Hanson shared for discussion/review a *Board Policy Review and Adoption Guidelines* document. He used this in Deer Park as part of the onboarding process for new board members.

Following discussion, the board affirmed the importance of having the first reading of policy/procedure adoptions and revisions as part of a Regular Board Meeting rather than at a Work Session, thereby providing the opportunity for Public Comment prior to the board taking action at a subsequent meeting.

On the topic of board policies, it was shared that WSSDA classifies policies as either *Essential*, *Encouraged* or *Discretionary*. To make a determination of district policies in need of revision and/or adoption, the board requested the district conduct an audit of its policies, including notation of the policy classification (*Essential*, *Encouraged* or *Discretionary*) and date of most recent revision. The audit will additionally include a list of WSSDA policies the district does not have. Starting with *Essential* policies, the plan is to begin the process of reviewing, adopting and/or revising policies systematically throughout the coming year.

#### **VIII. Technology ThoughtExchange Review/Update**

More than 500 individuals participated in a recent *ThoughtExchange* on the topic of Technology. After sharing findings with principals in early August, the results and next steps will be shared with the community. A technology update will be presented to the board at an upcoming meeting by Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley.

#### **IX. Welcome Back Day Update**

Following up on information shared at the June 26<sup>th</sup> Work Session regarding the plan at the *Welcome Back Day* event to provide each staff member with a tee-shirt to wear on the first day of school with the slogan, *You Can Do It . . . We Can Help*, Superintendent Hanson reported STCU, ALSC, Garco Construction and potentially Wendle Ford, are partnering with the district and will cover the entire cost of the tee-shirts. Tee-shirt backs will feature the logo of each of these sponsoring businesses.

In his remarks to staff at the *Welcome Back Day* event taking place at Mead High School on the morning of August 30<sup>th</sup>, Superintendent Hanson, in addition to focusing on the theme, *You Can Do It . . . We Can Help*, will talk about on the ideas of *Belonging*, *Purpose* and *Curiosity*. These are reoccurring themes shared with Superintendent Hanson by building administrators over the past few months.

#### **X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

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President

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Secretary