



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REGULAR MEETING  
February 8, 2023**

**Board  
Members:**

Mari Taylor, President  
Nina Hanson  
David Iseminger  
Vildan Kirby  
Paul Lund  
Ken D. Collins, Superintendent/Board Secretary

**Student  
Advisory  
Council  
Officers:**

The Lake Stevens School District Board of Directors met in a Regular Session at the Educational Service Center. A Zoom option was available for this meeting that President Taylor called to order at 6:30.

**ROLL CALL**

All board members were present except Director Nina Hanson was not able to attend the February 8, 2023 school board meeting.

**AGENDA/MINUTES**

Director Lund made a motion to approve the February 8, 2023 Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Kirby and approved with Director Hanson abstaining as she did not attend the meeting.

Director Iseminger made a motion to approve the January 25, 2023 minutes. The motion was seconded by Director Lund and approved with Director Hanson abstaining as she did not attend the meeting.

**RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Principal Jamie Sinning introduced the Lake Stevens Middle School Students of the Month for January: Jaxon Favorite, Calvin Newman, Joy Nurga, and Ariel Oliveri.

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Principal Brad Abels and Associate Principal Sara Mack introduced the North Lake Middle School Students of the Month for January: Kashika Sivakumar, Gavin McDonald, Lauren Soper, and Lohith Thimmichetty.

Principal James Sellers and Associate Principal Raphil Hasegawa introduced the Cavelero Mid High School Students of the Month for January: Samantha Gadwa, Jocelyn Roberts, and Ethan Johanson. William Henry was not able to attend the meeting.

Principal Leslie Ivelia and Dean of Students Michael Moore introduced the Lake Stevens High School Students of the Month for January: Jesse Guest, Julio Jimenez, Baylee Steen, Andrew Winston, Madelyn Ask, and Keaton Axtell.

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources John Balmer introduced the January APPLE Award recipients Kathleen Butler, Michelle McDermott, Lianne Strand, Roger Struthers, and Sara Titland.

A break was held from approximately 7:20 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**REPORTS OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND PROGRAMS**

Building Coordinator Matt Wyant was excited to talk about The Early Learning Center. He stated we are starting to see the research come out. This March they will welcome the first children that were born during the pandemic. Some of their students enrolling this year have not been out of their house, to the grocery store, or are seeing other students for the first time. He said he can't imagine being a first-time parent during COVID after caring for friends and family. He wants to set the tone to support their families as they welcome them into their school.

He stated that risks for developmental delay in the communication and personal-social domains were elevated in infants born during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to pre-pandemic infants, especially among girls.

Building Coordinator Wyant said ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) enrollment numbers are serving 107 three to four-year-olds. There are 37 three-year-olds and 70 4-year-olds. The Early Learning Center was just awarded seven additional slots in January.

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Building Coordinator Wyant presented comparison information on ECEAP Income Eligibility Limits. The qualifying income level for a family of three is \$33,152.00 annually or \$2,763.00 per month and for a reduced lunch level for a family of three is \$42,606.00 annually or \$3,551.00 per month. There is a \$9,454.00 difference between reduced level and ECEAP eligibility. He said we need to look for options for the students that do not qualify for ECEAP.

He also stated that the Developmental Preschool Program with students that have an Individual Education Plan provides specialized programming. They have a Structured Learning Center that provides speech walk-in services, a speech classroom, and inclusive programming.

Building Coordinator Wyant said the Early Learning Center Goal One Areas are: Excellence in Teaching and Learning/Academics-Measurable Student Goals. By the end of the 2022 school year, 90% of pre-kindergarten ECEAP students met or exceeded entry-level kindergarten expectations (social, Literacy, math) on the June checkpoints as measured by Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Building Coordinator Wyant displayed a chart on the GOLD Data for the fall of 2022-2023. He stated for social-emotional expectations 60% met the standards and 40% of the students were below the standard category. Building Coordinator Wyant said in the Language expectations 56% met the standards and 44% of the students were below the standard category. Building Coordinator Wyant said for cognitive expectations 61% met the standards and 39% fell below the standard category. In math, 56% met the standards and 44% of the students fell below the standard category.

Building Coordinator Wyant spoke about LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) for early childhood educators. He said the Early Learning Center staff and speech and language pathologists are participating in the online Early Childhood LETRS course. This training has strengthened their current practices and has provided ways to better support Literacy and Language development. Building Coordinator Wyant would like the curriculum needs to be considered as part of the Literacy adoption process, with the hopes of strengthening practice and alignment with K-5.

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Building Coordinator Wyant talked about the Early Learning Center's expanded summer program (June 21 – August 25) which provides connectivity to ready students for kindergarten. This is a three-hour-per-day program that runs Monday through Thursday. This program provides transportation, meals, and family support services. He stated the summer program has expanded from six weeks to nine weeks and they have sixty students in four classrooms.

Building Coordinator Wyant wanted to finish up by talking about the opportunities that support learning and skills development. He stated that last spring, Julie Sewald (Special Services Coordinator TOSA), invited kindergarten teams from each elementary school on a tour of the ELC. He said feedback was gathered from kindergarten teachers and shared with the ELC team. Building Coordinator Wyant said in September, TOSA Julie Sewald set up visits for ELC staff to see kindergarten classrooms at the elementary schools around the district. Building Coordinator Wyant expressed that they are pushing for students to become more independent. He shared a first-hand kindergarten scenario: If you have 150 kindergarten students in the cafeteria and each needs their milk open and you could open one milk every four seconds it would take ten minutes to open every milk. Building Coordinator Wyant stated if we do everything for them they are never going to learn how to do it. He stated we need to step back and let the students try to be independent.

Director Iseminger wanted to know about the kids that come in as three-year-olds, and how many return the next year. Building Coordinator Wyant answered almost all of the students continued to the next year. Director Iseminger also inquired about the students that exit the four-year-old program if they continue to kindergarten. Building Coordinator Wyant stated that when the students exit the four-year program 80% to 90% are meeting standards and continuing to kindergarten.

Building Coordinator Wyant shared how they collect information and compare it with private preschools. They compare teaching strategies and kindergarten objectives and how they do as a whole, as well as share newsletters. Building Coordinator Wyant stated feedback is the breakfast of champions!

Director Iseminger stated he is glad they are comparing and talking with feeder preschools for our kindergarten and readiness for a good transition. He said he loved the fact that they have a handle on the data.

President Taylor, Transition Specialist at the Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families, said as you are going through the list of what you are doing aligning the curriculum should be at the top of the list. She stated the impact of those transitions is important, especially for those that don't have the resources. President Taylor told Building Coordinator Wyant that we are so lucky to have him and she is very grateful for the work he is doing.

Director Lund stated he was so thankful for the work Building Coordinator Wyant was doing and asked him if he is getting enough help. Building Coordinator Wyant said that he has great support.

Director Iseminger expressed all the great work they are doing and he believes this is going to be the anchor for early learning.

Director Kirby wishes that we had more capabilities to help every family. She stated she wished we had the space and more kids that could qualify. Director Kirby expressed her thankfulness to Building Coordinator Wyant and his work.

#### **COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

President Taylor explained the protocols for community comments. She stressed comments should be addressed to her, the Board President; the Board would listen to the comments but not engage in discussion; there is a three-minute time allotment per individual; and this is not a place for remarks targeting specific individuals.

Doug Eklund talked about how he lived in this community for years and graduated from LSHS in 1965. His biggest concern is what is going on with the safety of our children concerning an employee. He stated this is not over yet because more people are coming forward. He remarked about another incident that he said was shoved under the carpet. Mr. Eklund said he should have gone to trial. He also stated this is not going to happen anymore. Mr. Eklund stated people are upset.

President Taylor called for any other community comments. Hearing none, she closed this portion of the meeting.

## DECISION ITEMS

### Consent Agenda:

Director Kirby made a motion to approve the "Consent Agenda" items:

1. Warrant Nos. 222300013 to 222300014 - \$594.36 (E: 25/23); Nos. 306807 - 306950 - \$900,173.44 (E: 26/23)
2. The Personnel Report: classified employment of Britney Baker, Stephanie Hill, Katie Marden, Julie Roberts, and Alex Nottingham; volunteer Conor Bardue; resignations of Paul Austria, Paige Barger, MacKenzie Lord, and Rona Welton; and retirement of Roger Anderson and Julie Banks (E: 27/23); the updated salary schedule for PSE-Office Professionals (E: 28/23); the January 2023 payroll, Warrants Nos. 306761 - 306804 - \$11,533,252.13; (E: 29/23);

The motion was seconded by Director Iseminger. The motion was unanimously approved.

Director Lund made a motion to approve Policy 1250 Board of Directors' Travel (E: 30/23). The motion was seconded by Director Iseminger. The motion was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Director Iseminger made a motion to approve Policy 3050 TRAVEL. (E: 31/23). The motion was seconded by Director Lund. The motion was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Director Kirby made a motion to approve Policy 1365 Reporting Improper Governmental Action (E: 32/23). The procedures have been updated to reflect our current practice. The motion was seconded by Director Iseminger. The motion was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Director Lund made a motion to approve Policy 5038 CHILD CUSTODY (E: 33/23). The motion was seconded by Director Kirby. The motion was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Director Kirby made a motion to approve the final acceptance of the public works projects. The motion was seconded by Director Lund. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources John Balmer presented the review of Policy No. 5510: Freedom of Expression. This policy and corresponding procedures have been updated to reflect the protections provided to public school journalists and their teachers/advisers set forth by the New Voices Act of 2018 and subsequent legislation (RCWA 28A.600.027 - Student expression in school-sponsored media). WSSDA model policy was considered and utilized in revising this policy.

The New Voices Act protects the press freedom of Washington's public school student journalists and states that student journalists cannot be censored by school officials, except in certain very narrow circumstances. Teachers/advisers cannot be penalized or retaliated against for refusing to infringe on their students' press rights.

This policy revision is aligned with laws protecting student journalists from censorship in anything that is prepared, substantially written, published, or broadcast by student journalists under the direction of a student media teacher that is distributed to the student body. The policy clearly states that student editors are responsible for determining the news, opinion, feature, and advertising content while clearly defining unprotected speech and characteristics of student expression that may be prohibited.

Assistant Superintendent Balmer asked if there were any questions.

Director Iseminger asked during the course of these publications if there was an advisor or yearbook overseer who is editing what is going on. Director Iseminger also asked what if there is a mid-high student that would like to publish something about themselves and a year later does not want it out there. Does this help prevent this from happening? He stated you might take the information down but it will still be out there. Director Iseminger stated we need to protect our students that may not be fully mature and later wish they hadn't said something.

Assistant Superintendent Balmer stated that it does speak to journalism teachers and that they are expected to teach professional standards. He stated we do not spell it out in this policy but he does think what Director Iseminger mentioned is something that parents and teachers need to talk about with social media fingerprints that do not go away.

President Mari Taylor said advisory teachers will have the primary responsibility.

Superintendent Collins stated that is why we hire excellent advisors. He also stated that if it is controversial the idea is that the advisory would bring it to the principal and have them read it and let them know what they think. That is how it is supposed to work. We have a fantastic advisory staff and this has not been an issue in a long time. He also said that this policy has been written to stand the test of time so journalistic advisors are guided pretty strongly by this.

Director Iseminger stated to put a fine point on this. For example, if a student wants to write a story about setting off a firecracker and they thought it was funny and we said this is not appropriate can they come back and say it says it is ok? He said we are here to protect our kids from themselves.

Assistant Superintendent Balmer said we need to give some significant guidance and censorship so we are not telling students they can't but can give suggestions for ideas to have that freedom of expression. He thanked everyone for their feedback.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Director Lund expressed it was another delightful evening and he loved the fact that we are running out of chairs. He was happy to talk to Madelyn Ask (one of our amazing Students of the Month). He learned what a remarkable person she has become and enjoyed speaking with her dad. Director Lund said it was a great night for Students of the Month and the Apple Award winners. He wanted to thank Building Coordinator Wyant for his energy and validation of what he is doing and how he is leading us to help families become successful. Director Lund also wanted to thank Mr. Eklund for coming in and sharing his views. Director Lund also wanted to thank Assistant Superintendent Main for her work on the policies.

Director Iseminger congratulated the Students of the Month and the Apple Award recipients. He stated it is compelling to hear from all of our students and about all the great contributions that our Apple Award winners are doing to help our students and this district. He thanked Building Coordinator Matt Wyant for his presentation and his great work at the Early Learning Center. He also wanted to thank



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Assistant Superintendent Main and Balmer for their tireless work on the policy changes. In closing, Director Iseminger said the safety of our kids, the environment, and our educators is very important.

Director Kirby wanted to thank everyone for reaching out to her regarding the earthquake. She said it is heartbreaking but her friends and family are safe. Director Kirby said coming tonight and seeing all the students warms her heart. She wanted to congratulate all of the Students of the Month and the Apple Award winners. She said seeing all the familiar faces and receiving hugs is what gives her hope. She thanked Building Coordinator Wyant for the Early Learning Center presentation. She said she is curious about the pandemic babies that will be attending the ELC soon. Director Kirby wanted to thank Assistant Superintendent Main and Assistant Superintendent Balmer for their work on the policies. Director Kirby stated the safety of our students is her number one concern.

Director Hanson echoed all the big hearty congratulations to our students of the month and our Apple award winners. She stated you have set such wonderful examples for our community. Thank you Building Coordinator Wyant for the great work and she can't wait to visit the Early Learning Center again. She wanted to thank Assistant Superintendent Teresa Main for her work on revising the board policies. Director Hanson stated to LSSD Counselors you are golden! She thanked them for all of the love, energy, and care they pour into our students and others. She said Happy Counseling week. Director Hanson also stated Happy Belated Lunar New Year to our district families who celebrate this holiday and Happy Black history month to all! She stated as an Asian American woman, the privileges and benefits she experiences are much in part because of her African American brothers and sisters. This month especially is a great time to be in a position of learning and growth alongside our students. Director Hanson said in the words of a very influential Black scholar, Cornel West, who during her college years – broke bread with her and shared these words that he penned many years before that, "Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public" and "Empathy is not simply a matter of trying to imagine what others are going through but having the will to muster enough courage to do something about it. In a way, empathy is predicated upon hope." Director Hanson said education is a matter of Justice and this month I encourage our teachers and staff to remember that the work they do is of paramount importance. She implored you to not only "include" Black history but to model and teach American history justly by

sharing authentic Black stories, that 1.) challenge us to think critically, 2.) simultaneously remind us of enduring hope, and 3.) affirm that representation matters to our students in their learning. She also said to remember that every day you come to work is an act of courage, an opportunity to exercise empathy, and that by doing so you're changing lives and the trajectory of equity in our community. Director Hanson said thank you for doing this work and for loving deeply. She is so proud to be a part of this community and honored to be considered to partner with everyone in this!

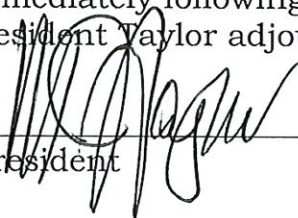
President Taylor said thank you for a great night and for sharing those lovely Students of the Month and Apple Award winners with us. She stated she is very grateful to be a part of this.

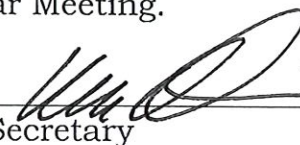
### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:20 pm, President Taylor stated a 40-minute Executive Session was necessary to discuss the performance of an employee. At 9:00 pm President Taylor reconvened the Regular Meeting. No action was taken during the Executive Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Immediately following, with no objections by the other directors, President Taylor adjourned the Regular Meeting.

  
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President

  
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Secretary