



**Board Work Session Minutes
Monday, October 23, 2023**

The Board of Directors held a Work Session on Monday, October 23, 2023. The meeting began at 6 pm and was held at District Office. Directors Denholm, Olson, Cannon and Gray were present. Director Burchard was excused. Also attending were Superintendent Travis Hanson and Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson.

I. Approval of the Agenda

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

II. Enrollment Update

Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson reported October 1st enrollment, including Running Start students, is 10,144 (FTE). September enrollment, which did not include Running Start, was 9,793 (FTE). Overall enrollment is 66 (FTE) below budget with Basic Ed enrollment 209 (FTE) under budget.

In taking a closer look at factors impacting enrollment, Ms. Ellingson shared the following four takeaways:

#1 - Kindergarten enrollment, in particular, is substantially lower (60 FTE) than projected. Approximately 50% of the decline can be attributed to lower birthrates in 2017/18. The district will be exploring the purchase of birthrate data by zip code to help with future enrollment predictions/planning.

#2 - Running Start enrollment is higher than projected. There are 400 students enrolled in the program, either full-time or part-time, resulting in 365 FTE. Running Start FTE is typically 300. The higher number of Running Start students correlates directly to the loss of basic ed enrollment at Mead High School and Mt. Spokane High School. The majority of monies received for Running Start students is paid to the colleges/universities where students are taking classes. The district retains 7% of these monies to cover administrative-type expenses.

#3 - ALE enrollment is up. The 2023/24 budget used the January FTE of 562 for budgeting purposes. Enrollment in June of last year was 606 and, as of October 1st, FTE is 642. This increase is primarily attributed to the addition of the Outdoor School offered through Mead Learning Options. In investigating where students are coming from, Ms. Ellingson shared 18 students are in-district transfers. The remainder are new to the district. The Outdoor School is very popular with a waitlist of approximately 20 students. The district is unable to expand this program because of physical space limitations.

#4 - Special Education enrollment, K-21, is higher than projected. It currently sits at 1650. At this enrollment number district special education expenses will likely exceed the 15% state funding cap. Any monies needed to operate the program once the funding cap is reached must be backfilled with either basic education or levy funds. In the 2022/23 school year the amount of money used to "backfill" special education was \$918,000. Ms. Ellingson noted the importance of advocating for the legislature to provide "cap free" special education funding. Special Education students are primarily students who reside

in the Mead School District. The addition of new group homes located within district boundaries has had a significant impact on enrollment and resources.

III. Levy Update

Superintendent Hanson provided board members with a copy of levy information that will be shared at upcoming staff meetings. The first two staff meetings take place on October 31st with the last scheduled for December 8th. The levy information handouts included the following:

- Answer to the question, *Where does our money come from?*
- Answer to the question, *What is a levy?*
- Answers to the questions, *Why more? Why now?*
- A graph showing the decline in Local Effort Assistance (LEA) received from the state from 2018 to 2024.
- Infographic illustrating levy-funded programs and staff, along with the cost to taxpayers.
- *What the Levy Pays For* infographic that includes a breakdown of where each levy dollar is spent and the percentage of the total levy budget for each spending category. For example, 16¢ of every levy dollar is spent on *Athletics, Performing Arts & Clubs* with 100% of the cost for this category paid for with levy monies. In the *Nurses/Health Services* category the amount spent per levy dollar is 4¢ which represents 37.1% of the total *Nurses/Health Services* budget.
- Charts showing Mead's tax rate history and how Mead's tax rate compares with other Spokane County school districts.

Reiterating information shared at prior board meetings, Superintendent Hanson noted \$5-\$6 million of the \$10 million in additional annual levy monies will be used to cover costs that are currently being paid out of reserves, \$2 million will go toward replenishing fund balance and the remainder will provide monies to enhance safety & security, as well as adopt/purchase curriculum.

The presented levy information will provide the script/framework for upcoming Zoom and in-person community meetings regarding the replacement ballot measure.

Discussion included Director Cannon noting the importance of distilling the information into quick sound bites. Superintendent Hanson shared the information will be condensed into a front/back insert for an upcoming *Mead Matters*. The board noted the importance of clearly communicating Mead taxes are not the highest in Spokane County.

Superintendent Hanson shared with the board the levy renewal PowerPoint he will be using in an upcoming presentation to Greater Spokane, Incorporated. He additionally shared/reviewed statewide information on satisfaction levels with public schools in Washington noting, in particular, that Spokane County has the highest public school satisfaction rate in the state (55%). When survey respondents were asked to share priority spending areas, top categories were mental health, safety/security and CTE.

In conclusion, Superintendent Hanson invited the board to get back with him in the next few days with any additional feedback on the levy handouts.

IV. Board Protocols/Operating Principles Ongoing Discussion

Discussion on board protocols/operating principles was postponed and will be discussed at an upcoming Work Session.

V. Board Meeting Minutes Discussion

As a follow-up to the question raised by Director Gray at the October 9, 2023 Regular Board Meeting regarding whether or not board minutes should be posted online prior to official board

approval, Board Clerk Jolene Andres provided information for the board to consider prior to making a change to current practice.

Prior to meetings being recorded it was an expectation of patrons that minutes be made available as quickly as possible. Now that meetings are recorded patrons are able to listen to the meeting but that takes much longer than reading the minutes. With business meetings now only taking place once each month waiting until minutes receive board approval would result in a lengthy delay before posting. It was shared that in the past 13+ years there have been very few (less than five) instances when minutes were not approved as presented. In those few cases, previously posted minutes were replaced with revised minutes.

Following discussion, and noting in particular the length of time between business meetings, it was the consensus of the board to continue with the current practice of posting minutes online as soon as they are ready.

VI. Policy Revisions/Adoptions Discussion

Regarding the major policy revision/adoption project the district/board are currently working on, Superintendent Hanson shared that as a general rule redlined revisions will be presented. However, sometimes the change is so extensive that is not practical. When that is the case the Point Sheet that accompanies the first reading presentation will reference the significant extent of the revision.

On the topic of bringing policies back for second reading approval, when there were no recommended first reading revisions, the idea of listing those, for expediency's sake, on the Consent Agenda was discussed. Noting the importance of policy revisions and/or adoptions not getting lost in the typical Consent Agenda, it was the consensus of the board to have second reading policy revisions and adoptions, that had no recommended first reading revisions, be incorporated into their own, stand-alone, Consent Agenda.

VII. Superintendent Update

Superintendent Hanson provided an update on the following topics:

- **Green Building Standards** - Superintendent Hanson and Maintenance Director Travis Bown met with the legislator who drafted the Green Building Standards legislation. At this meeting Mr. Bown was able to share the impact of the legislation on school districts and advocate for revisions. In its current form school districts do not have the financial resources, short of asking voters to approve additional capital projects funding, to comply with requirements.
- **Learning Improvement Day** -The information shared by Ken Williams at the October 6th Learning Improvement Day was very well received. Mr. Williams presented on the topic of equity in the morning followed by the opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue about what was presented in the afternoon. Mr. Williams causes people to think and can make some a bit uncomfortable. This led to great conversations taking place in the afternoon session. Feedback following the training was very positive with attendees noting it was one of the better Learning Improvement Days they have experienced particularly in terms of engagement.
- **Technology** - Superintendent Hanson referenced two books written by Delaney Ruston, M.D. - *Parenting in the Screen Age* and *Screenagers*. In conjunction with ESD 101 the district will have the opportunity to host in December or January one of six screenings of three different documentary videos on the topic of screen time. Providing video viewing opportunities will be a great technology resource for parents.
- **Mental Health/Social Emotional Supports** - Referencing the recent passing of Mountainside teacher James Tucker, Superintendent Hanson expressed appreciation for the district's Crisis Team, led by Josh Westermann and Stacy Cornwell, that was instrumental in supporting students and staff at Mountainside the week following his

death. Supports were also in place at Midway where James taught before moving to Mountainside and at the elementary school and high school where his children attend. It is immensely valuable to have systems in place to help deal with very tough and emotional situations like the passing of a staff member or student.

- **Elementary Conferences** - Regarding Fall Conferences that took place October 11-13, Superintendent Hanson shared he only heard good reports.
- **Rivalry Week** - *Catfight Volleyball* and *Battle of the Bell* take place on Thursday (October 26) and Friday (October 27). Superintendent Hanson invited any board member in attendance to join him for the presentation of the annual *CatScramble* check at each of these events.
- **Mead Learning Options** - Superintendent Hanson recently had a three-hour conversation with Principal Nick Edwards regarding the programs offered at Mead Learning Options. This included reviewing historical background, an overview of what is currently offered, talking about what is going well, as well as looking at program challenges. The importance of having a clear vision for MLO moving forward was discussed particularly in light of the fact that the program can only be housed at the old Northwood location for four more years. There are many logistical pieces to work through. Superintendent Hanson shared there is a need to do an on-site, 6-8 week program review culminating in a written report that includes recommendations for the program moving forward. Superintendent Hanson noted the possibility of retaining retired ESD 101 Assistant Superintendent Mick Miller, who has an extensive ALE background, to conduct this audit. Further updates will be forthcoming.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

President

Secretary