Richland Schools
Office of the Superintendent

Memorandum

Date: **11/17/23**
To: School Board
From: Shelley Redinger
Subject: Friday Packet

Enclosed please find the following documents:

- Board Dates to Remember
- Community Events/Activities
- Media

Richland School District
6972 Keene Road
West Richland WA 99353

TO: Board of Directors
RE: Event Dates
DATE: 11/17/23

November:

- **11/28/23…Board Meeting-Board Room-6:30**
  - **5:30-6:30-Ex Session-(only if needed)**

- **TBD…Board Workshop/Bond Discussion**

December:

- **12/12/23…Board Meeting-Board Room-6:30**
  - **6:00-6:30-Ex Session-Superintendent Check In**

- **12/18/23-1/2/24…Winter Break**

January:

- **1/9/24…Board Meeting-Board Room-6:30**
  - **Ex. Session-(only if needed)**

- **1/23/23…Board Meeting-Board Room-6:30**
  - **Ex. Session-(only if needed)**

February:

- **2/13/24…Board Meeting-Board Room-6:30**
  - **Ex. Session-(only if needed)**

- **2/27/24…Board Meeting-Board Room-6:30**
  - **Ex. Session-(only if needed)**

Upcoming Events/Activities

This list is suggestions of RSD and community events to attend as a Board Member. By no means is it a comprehensive list of all activities in the District. Future events will be added weekly.

November

Friday 17th:

- Homelink Secondary Marimba Concert
  6 – 7:30 PM
  Chief Jo Auditorium
- Jazz Concert w/Derico Watson
  7 PM
  HHS Auditorium
- "The Variety Show"
  7 PM
  Leona Libby Middle School

https://gofan.co/app/school/WA85702

Saturday 18th:

- Winter Bazaar
  9 AM – 3 PM
  Marcus Whitman Elementary
- Holiday Bazaar
  9 AM – 3 PM
  Jason Lee Elementary
- "The Variety Show"
  7PM
  Leona Libby Middle School
  https://gofan.co/app/school/WA85702

Tuesday 21st:

Band Concert
7 PM
HHS Auditorium

Wednesday 29th:

Choir Holiday Concert
6:30 – 8:15 PM
Hanford High School

Thursday 29th:

Asking is Caring Presentation
6 PM
Leona Libby Middle School

Thursday 30th:

- Choir Holiday Concert
  6:30 – 8:15 PM
  Hanford High School
- Santa Selfie and Cookie Workshop
  5 – 7:30 PM
  Early Learning Center

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050C4DA9A922A4F85-46042729-photos#/

December

Friday 1st:

- Santa Selfie and Cookie Workshop
  9 AM - 4 PM
  Early Learning Center

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050C4DA9A922A4F85-46042729-photos#/

- Winterfest at Wiley
  6 – 7:30 PM
  William Wiley Elementary
- Choir Holiday Concert
  6:30 – 8:15 PM
  Hanford High School

Wednesday 6th:

Asking is Caring Presentation
6 PM
Jefferson Elementary

Saturday 9th:

Hanford Holiday Bazaar
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Hanford High School

Monday 11th:

- Homelink Play "A Christmas Carol"
  12:30 PM AND 4:30 PM
  ACT Theatre

5 takeaways from this week's hottest Tri-Cities school and city council races

BOB BRAWDY BBRAWDY@TRICITYHERALD.COM

A sign posted outside the Franklin County Courthouse campus in Pasco reminds residents to vote on election day.

BY ERIC ROSANE
AND CORY MCCOY
NEWS@TRICITYHERALD.COM

Kennewick, WA
Some interesting story lines are emerging in Tri-Cities as the dust settles from the Nov. 7 general election.

Voters mostly supported incumbents, but there were some surprising shakeups and shifts in this year's local city council and school board elections.

Election results will be certified by county canvassing boards by Tuesday, Nov. 28.

Here are five takeaways from this week's results:

1. GOP SWEEP IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

Republicans in Pasco didn't just have a good night at the polls — they had a great night.

All six candidates endorsed by the Franklin County Republican Party won.

Charles Grimm, Leo Perales, David Milne and Peter Harpster were elected or reelected to the Pasco City Council. Steve Norberg and Steve Simmons won seats on the Pasco School Board.

And they won handily, too. All six GOP-endorsed candidates led their opponents by double-digit percentage margins.

Four of them beat out incumbents who had been appointed in recent months by either the city council or school board.

"I really think the community wanted a realignment, and I think the races not being as close is what really speaks to that," said Stephen Bauman, chair of the Franklin County Republican Party.

Normally local races in off-year elections are "nonpartisan," meaning candidates don't declare party affiliation. But local Republicans have been willing in recent years to back candidates in nonpartisan races where they see opportunity.

Some Democrats are waking up to that reality. The Benton County Democrats this cycle backed a candidate who won a seat on the Prosser City Council, but Democrats in Franklin County continued their practice of not endorsing in nonpartisan races.

Bauman said what worked for the Republicans this cycle was backing candidates whose values aligned with voters and working hard on the campaign trail. Their candidates also had relevant experience in running small businesses, development or education.

It also will be the first time in many years that conservatives have held a strong majority on the Pasco council.

"Voter turnout was unfortunately very low," said Ana Ruiz Kennedy, chair of the Franklin County Democrats, in a statement. "The election was decided by 15% of all registered voters. The candidates that won made sure that their supporters got their ballots in."

Pasco is among the youngest cities in Eastern Washington, and yet young voters just didn't return ballots.

Rates of returned ballots in Pasco among voters between the ages of 18 and 54 was low when compared with turnout across Washington state.

Less than 10% of Pasco voters between the ages of 18 and 24 returned their ballots, compared with more than half of voters 65 and older did.

2. RICHLAND VOTERS AFFIRM CONTROVERSIAL RECALL

Voters in the Richland School District have had enough with the hoopla.

The school board results mark a strong reaffirmation of the Aug. 1 primary election results that ousted three public officials over an illegal vote to defy Washington state COVID mandates last year.

The Benton County Republican Party appears to have failed in its effort to take back control of the Richland School Board. All three endorsed candidates — Nino Kapitula, Gene Nemeth and Kari Williams — are failing in their races.

Instead, voters have selected three candidates backed by the teachers union — Jill Oldson, Chelsie Beck and Katrina Waters — to serve out the next four years.

“I think (voters) are looking for stability on the board,” said Brian Brendel, one of the four petitioners who orchestrated the recall. “They’re looking for people who can adhere to the oath of office and recognize that, by design, it’s not a partisan office.”

Voters over the summer chose to oust Williams, Audra Byrd and Semi Bird over their February 2022 vote.

The decision put the school district in legal jeopardy, as well as risked state apportionment dollars, and forced administrators to close schools for two days before the board ultimately chose to walk back its decision.

The seats held by Bird and Williams were up for election this year. Bird declined to run for a second term, opting instead to focus on his 2024 campaign for governor, while Williams campaigned to get her seat back.

Voters ultimately chose her challenger, Waters, who was leading Wednesday’s vote count with a 12-point advantage.

“This gives us the chance to move forward and get back to the business of educating our kids to the best of our ability, as opposed to arguing over politics,” Brendel said.

3. KENNEWICK SCHOOLS KEEP A MODERATE, BUT SHIFT RIGHT

The new Kennewick School Board will be very green.

While voters chose to reelect Michael Connors to a second term, two new school board members will replace a pair leaving.

Brenda Gledhill and Josh Miller won election to the board and will take their seats in December. They’ll offer a more conservative approach to school issues, both promising to prioritize parental rights and engagement.

Connors, a moderate Republican, will be the only school board member in Kennewick with more than two years of experience. He defeated a conservative challenger in Dustin Petersen this week.

“We’re focused on student outcomes,” Connors wrote in a election eve Facebook post. “We’re pro-parental rights. We support our staff and teachers. We also reject fringe ideological agendas from both sides of the political aisle.”

Will the new school board be more willing to dive into “culture war” issues that have been filling the agendas of school boards across the nation? Only time will tell.

But Kennewick will have bigger issues to face in the coming months and years, with a continued spending deficit and declining rates of kindergarten enrollment.

4. INCUMBENTS RULE IN KENNEWICK, RICHLAND RACES

City council voters in Richland and Kennewick chose experience over a new direction this week.

Incumbents in Richland and Kennewick won overwhelmingly over their challengers.

Chuck Torelli, Brad Beauchamp and Jim Millbauer all won reelection to their seats on the Kennewick City Council.

Millbauer was the only one who faced a challenger. He beat out Ted Owens by more than 10 percentage points.

Jhoanna Jones, Theresa Richardson, Shayne VanDyke and Ryan Whitten all earned another term on the Richland City Council.

Kurt Maier will be the new face on Richland City Council. He will replace longtime Councilman Terry Christensen.

Even West Richland City Council incumbent Kate Moran won reelection, fending off a strong conservative challenger in David Cole.

However, Port of Benton voters chose Scott Keller, the former executive director, over an appointed incumbent for the seat vacated by Bob Larsen.

5. HUGE SHAKEUP ON THE PROSSER CITY COUNCIL

Prosser's city council has found itself at the center of heated public debate, and Tuesday's election indicates a sea-change coming to the council.

Residents have been vocal about opposition to a failed bond to rebuild the city hall and police station after a fire, at a much higher price tag. Even after the bond failed last November, residents did not stop pushing for the council to abandon plans for expanding its footprint rather than just rebuilding.

The vitriol in the election last year was apparent when a "Karen" effigy was put up by city employees, allegedly targeting a resident who had been leading opposition to the bond proposal.

After Tuesday election, a new council will be deciding how Prosser replaces its city hall and police station. The city council will have four new city council members.

Two incumbents — Mayor Randy Taylor and Councilwoman Stephanie Groom — are losing their reelection bids to challengers.

Should schools fear students cheating with AI?

Tri-Cities teacher says it could be revolutionary.

BOB BRAWDY BBRAWDY@TRICITYHERALD.COM

Science teacher John Weisenfeld is incorporating AI into his classroom lessons at Pasco High School.

BY ERIC ROSANE
EROSANE@TRICITYHERALD.COM

Pasco, WA
Most teachers will open a textbook or reference the curriculum when students ask a tough question.

But John Weisenfeld wants to go a little further.

The Pasco High School science teacher is quick to his keyboard — to Perplexity AI or any other artificial intelligence chatbots — to find the answer.

“It allows me to capitalize on the energy and interest of the moment and provide accurate, targeted, detailed information,” he said.

You’ve probably heard of artificial intelligence, or AI. It’s an umbrella term that’s been used for decades to describe any machine-learning technology for completing tasks.

The rise in recent months of generative AI websites that use computers to create content — such as text from ChatGPT or image generation from DeepAI — has prompted discussion far and wide about the technology’s role in many industries.

In education, many public schools and universities went on the offensive and blocked popular sites early on. The fear was that students would use text generators to fake essays or to cheat on their school work.

But now school districts from Walla Walla to New York are reversing those decisions, some claiming to embrace the potential of this “game-changing technology.”

Weisenfeld says it’s the right move.

He believes AI technology has the ability to revolutionize the way educators work and teach — in planning, grading, instruction and beyond.

It also can help students gain a deeper understanding of concepts.

“My goal is to make teachers more efficient or get more enjoyment from what they’re doing. But that also spills over to students,” Weisenfeld, who started a 400-person email group on tech tips for his district.

AI IN THE CLASSROOM

Weisenfeld has always been at the forefront of technological innovations.

Before he began teaching in 2011, he spent a decade as a software test engineer with Microsoft, working on Windows Live Messenger and on apps in the Office suite.

Not all teachers are as plugged into AI as he is.

About 40% of teachers surveyed in Education Week say they know enough about the technology to understand it but have never used it. Roughly 1 in 10 say they know enough to teach it or use it to some degree in their work.

Weisenfeld began implementing AI into his instruction and first began to consider the broader uses for students last year. That's when he assigned an essay in his nanotechnology class asking students to explain why geckos can walk upside down.

He gave them the assignment and rubric, and encouraged them to use chatbots to ask questions and write detailed answers.

"It was an 'aha moment' because I realized we can start asking better and better questions," he said. "This could raise the academic language and engagement in any class."

Instead of simple responses, Weisenfeld said students dove into complex topics and detailed explanations of the gecko's setae, spatulae and the Van der Waals forces.

After receiving their first draft, Weisenfeld fed the student essays into a chatbot for revision feedback.

The Pasco teacher also had his astronomy students ask AI chatbots for information about interplanetary NASA missions and if they could play a part in warning the Earth about major solar storms in the future.

A poster detailing the missions hangs in his classroom.

EDUCATING OUR 'DIGITAL CITIZENS'

Most school districts in the nation and Washington state — including Pasco, Richland and Kennewick — have not yet drafted a policy on the use of AI in classes.

Mira Gobel, Pasco's assistant superintendent of schools and social-emotional learning, said while it's important to use the technology to enhance education, it's also an opportunity to teach students what it means to be a "digital citizen."

"They're the digital generation without the understanding of what it means to be a digital citizen... I think we also need to do our due diligence in doing that education simultaneously," she told the Tri-City Herald.

In a statement, the Pasco School District said its next steps with AI will be informed by "rigorous research-based best practices, with careful consideration of the policy and practice implications, ensuring that our students and staff benefit from the most responsible and beneficial use of artificial intelligence in education."

For example, AI could be beneficial in teaching English phrases and sentence structure in Pasco schools where one in three students are English language learners, said Gobel.

"I think it's new ground for most districts," she said.

In Richland, the school district does not currently have a policy in place on students and teachers using AI.

But, like most school districts, students there are required to cite sources and information if they pull from others' work.

Collin Gibbs, a history teacher at Hanford High School, is using AI tools, including ChatGPT, in the planning, organization and instructional design process and is sharing his results with fellow instructors, said district public information officer Shawna Dinh.

"He views the use of AI as a thought partner and believes that both proactively supporting his colleagues and teaching students how to use AI as a tool is the best and most productive path forward," Dinh told the Herald.

Both Richland and Kennewick school districts are currently gathering information to begin drafting policies around the use of AI in the classroom.

“We are in the process of learning and conducting research and a committee will be working to develop draft policy, with input from stakeholders, to bring to our board sometime after the first of the year,” said Robyn Chastain, Kennewick’s executive director of communications and public relations.

DO STUDENT’S CHEAT?

Weisenfeld compares the conversation we’re having today about AI with a similar one teachers were having decades ago with digital calculators.

Teachers are worried about cheating — and so are students.

A recent Junior Achievement-Big Village national survey showed while nearly half of students say they were likely to use AI to do their school work instead of doing it themselves, about 60% also perceive a reliance on AI as cheating.

But both Weisenfeld and Gobel see AI as more of a tool than a crutch.

“When I think about the cheating-plagiarism question, well, what if I tell students, ‘You have to use ChatGPT on this assignment?’ Well, then we turn things on its head,” Weisenfeld said.

https://www.applevalleynewsnow.com/news/carmichael-middle-school-is-officially-a-richland-heart-safe-campus/article_05aebb7c-8247-11ee-828c-4f6821878ab3.html

Carmichael Middle School is officially a Richland Heart safe Campus

Morgan Huff - Apple Valley News Now
Nov 13, 2023

RICHLAND, Wash. -- The Richland School District has announced that Carmichael Middle School is official a Richland Heart Safe Campus.

Fire Captain Josh Smith for Richland Fire and Emergency Services and his Heart Safe team trained Carmichael staff how to do hands-only CPR and how to use a automated external defibrillator (AED) in August 2023. On October 25, the school practiced this technic with an "emergency medical" drill to finish their Heart Safe Certification.

An AED is a life-saving device which can deliver a controlled electric shock to restore normal heart rhythms during a cardiac emergency.

The staff is now completely trained to recognize and respond to any cardiac arrest emergency, increasing the chances of survival and minimizing potential long-term health impacts.

"The safety and well-being of our students and staff are one of the district's top priorities," says Assistant Director of Human Resources Kellie Lacey. "Achieving Heart Safe certification is a significant step forward in enhancing our school's readiness to respond to medical emergencies."

Several AEDs have been placed throughout Carmichael Middle School.

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MORE ON APPLEVALLEYNEWSNOW.COM

'You're a beautiful soul' | Benton City's Faith Martin says goodbye to the Golden Bachelor
Erin Wencl, Rylee Fitzgerald

Kennewick, Prosser men killed in crash near Benton City
Erin Wencl

West Richland police investigating drive-by shooting
Erin Wencl, Alyssa Warner

Local artists sought as Pasco's ESD 123 embarks on pioneering early childhood arts program

by KEPR Staff
Wed, November 15th 2023, 12:15 PM PST

KEPR Action News

Pasco, Wash. — Educational Service District 123 in Pasco has received a grant for the school year benefitting Early Childhood Learning, now they're now looking for artists to help teach.

Alexis Sarah, Arts in Education (Arts WA) Project Manager, says. Art has so many benefits no matter what the art form. It helps with their(students) cognitive skills, making abstract concepts, it helps them build social emotional skills because they have to cooperate, collaborate or be observers. It can really help with health and well-being. It provides a space where there is no right or wrong answer."

ESD d as the pilot to Washington state's Wolf Trap residency program. It ain
pres r seven weeks in both Pasco and Walla Walla.

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KEPR Action News

Promoted Links

What if WW1 had never happened? Game simulates historical scenarios
Historical Strategy Game
Play Now

Franklin County man accused of son's murder faces court, potential life sentence looming

Odd Trick That Gets Rid Of Dust (You'll Wish You Tried It Sooner)
Clarifion
Read More

Missing persons case in Kennewick turns into homicide investigation after three bodies found

Lisa Brouwer-Thompson, Arts Coordinator, says. "My biggest wish, is that we can provide this for everybody. Because, I just think it's so powerful. I think it's something that's just going to take time. It's going to happen. I mean, the fact that our agency is actually putting arts as a priority, that they've made it a program this year, is so powerful to me. And then seeing it transform and happen in our classrooms, I really do believe it's just going to be a matter of time. "

Over sses will learn about different forms of art like music, storytelling, and ppen, the p .

27° 42° 42°

BE THE FIRST TO COMMENT

Any local artists (musicians, dancers, actors, storytellers, or puppeteers, etc.) interested are encouraged to apply by November 27th, you can find more information here.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Franklin County man accused of son's murder faces court, potential life sentence looming

Missing persons case in Kennewick turns into homicide investigation after three bodies found

Body found in submerged vehicle overnight at Columbia Point Marina

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Your voice matters. Discussions are moderated for civility. See our guidelines.

School districts are preparing for national milk carton shortage

JOAN BARNETT LEE • McClatchy file
There are still a large number of schools and districts using classic cardboard milk cartons.

BY KARLEE VAN DE VENTER AND ROSEMARY MONTALVO
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RMONTALVO@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM

Milk is an integral part of school lunches. If you're building a tray in a school cafeteria, especially before high school, chances are, your drink options are varieties of milk.

In Washington state, schools generally have one of three kinds of milk supplies: cartons, pouches or dispensers.

The milk pouches grew in popularity during the 90s and 2000s. School districts across the country opted for the pouches over cartons to save money and reduce waste. Since then, reports have varied regarding popularity dips.

In recent years, some schools have implemented milk dispensers to cut out even more waste. Instead of half-pint plastic bags for each individual student, these schools stock up on large pouches of milk, between three and five gallons, which is then placed inside the dispenser. It has multiple spouts, so students can take reusable cups to pour the amount of milk they want.

Despite these innovations, there are still a large number of schools and districts, nationwide and in the state, using the classic cardboard cartons. These schools have been informed of a national milk carton shortage and the possible impacts it may have. Here is what we know about the shortage.

KRISTINE SHERRED • KSHERRED@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM
At Spanaway Elementary School outside, lunch on Oct. 20, 2021, included a ham and cheese hoagie, Sun Chips, cherry tomatoes and nonfat chocolate milk. Bethel School District in Pierce County, Washington, serves its 20,000 students through a central kitchen, and pandemic supply issues have altered how food is prepped and packaged.

Milk carton shortage impact on WA

Recently, the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) sent a statement to school districts about the national milk carton shortage. Because the shortage affects only milk cartons, not the milk itself, some schools will be unaffected.

The severity the shortage will have on Washington state is not currently clear. But these districts using cartons are preparing for possible impacts.

- **Tacoma**

Tacoma Public Schools is facing the shortage in milk cartons, but has a contingency plan in place to provide students with the milk that is available as well as alternatives to milk cartons, Tacoma Public Schools Chief Communications Officer Tanisha Jumper said in an email.

Jumper stated in the email that OSPI has approved that Tacoma Public Schools "take advantage of '7 CFR 210.10(d)(2)(i)' waiver allowing juice as an alternative until allowable milk types become available."

Jumper added that all students in the Tacoma Public Schools will have access to the milk variety that is available daily and they will also have the option of having juice as an alternative if needed.

Tacoma Public Schools will also be providing all Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Head Start staff with gallons of milk to pour for all Pre-K students with their family style meal service.

▪ **Thurston County**

The Olympia School District has several milk dispensers in place at specific schools, but also has several schools without dispensers. For those schools, a contingency plan has been put in place, in the event the shortage impacts the district, according to Conor Schober, the district's Community Relations Coordinator.

The district has also informed parents of the contingency plan. The letter to parents reports the Olympia School District milk provider is expecting availability to change each day. There may be days with limited supply or milk alternatives instead.

If half pints are not available during a school meal, students can ask kitchen staff to receive a poured cup of milk, according to Schober.

The North Thurston Public Schools have not seen a shortage in milk carton orders, but they have a plan in place in case they are affected, North Thurston Public Schools Executive Director of Communications Amy Blondin said in an email.

Blondin said that if the North Thurston Public Schools were to be affected by the shortage, they will prioritize their elementary schools for any half pints of milk available.

“We have let our school leaders know they may be seeing different brands, flavors, and fat contents, and if milk is not available, we will apply for waivers and offer juice and water,” Blondin said.

They have also ordered shelf-stable milk to have on-hand in case there is a shortage.

▪ **Bellingham**

Bellingham Public Schools has also notified families about the shortage. In the most recent update, it says the district will have fresh milk through the week of Nov. 13 and is working closely with their supplier. It also says it is looking for other adequate options in case they are necessary.

Students have always had access to water during meals, but are now also encouraged to bring refillable water bottles or ask for a cup. This way, they remain adequately hydrated throughout any impacts of the shortage.

TRI-CITY HERALD FILE
Tri-Cities school students will be able pick up a sack lunch and breakfast during the six-week break.

▪ **Tri-Cities**

The Richland School District's Public Information Officer Shawna Dinh told McClatchy that the district's latest Darigold shipment was received in full. They are coordinating with OSPI and their distributors to keep an eye on future impacts.

Staff with the Kennewick School District did not immediately respond to inquiries.

Pasco School District is also aware of the impacts and coordinating with OSPI, according to the Director of Nutrition Services, Kristen Blair. The district's Public Affairs Director, Anna Tensmeyer, told McClatchy that they are working with their distributor through the situation and will act accordingly as it continues. This week, only white milk was offered, instead of the usual choice between white and chocolate.

Tri-Cities PAC responds to allegations of campaign libel, defamation

COURTESY WASHINGTON PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION
A complaint has been filed with the Washington Public Disclosure Commission claiming that campaign signs placed adjacent to those belonging to Mike Connors are false and a "blatant attempt to deceive the public."

BY ERIC ROSANE
EROSANE@TRICITYHERALD.COM

A conservative political action committee in Tri-Cities, Wash., is denying allegations they made false statements against a Kennewick School Board candidate.

The response comes after a campaign aid for Michael Connors, a local Republican seeking reelection to the school board, filed a complaint last month with the Washington Public Disclosure Commission (PDC).

The complaint alleges the We Want Accountability PAC broke state law when they erected campaign signs next to his, with false messages like: "Voted With Liberals 100%," "Kept Our Kids In Masks" and "Supports CRT (critical race theory) in Schools."

The PAC is hoping to get Connors' conservative challenger, Dustin Petersen, elected instead.

In a response filed this week with the PDC, We Want Accountability organizers presented an “alternative view of the facts” from Connors’ that support the accuracy of their signs.

“The PDC will need to do an independent evaluation of the evidence provided,” wrote Jerry Martin, We Want Accountability’s secretary.

An investigation would test the veracity of claims on both sides of the issue. It’s a violation of Washington state law to “sponsor with actual malice a statement constituting libel or defamation” in political advertising.

Natalie Johnson, a communications specialist for the PDC, told the Tri-City Herald she doesn’t believe they’ve received complaints before about adjacent campaign signs.

“While normally the PDC doesn’t regulate sign placement, the placement here matters because it adds necessary context that indicates who the PAC was referring to in its own sign,” Johnson said.

She declined to comment further on the specifics of the case, but said it’s normally the responsibility of cities and counties to enact and enforce regulations around sign placement.

The PDC opened its case Oct. 18 and is currently conducting an initial review of the facts. The state agency has 90 days from that date to determine if it will open an investigation or resolve it by other means.

The PAC could be responsible for damages or a fine if the violations are proven by clear and convincing evidence.

We Want Accountability PAC has previously been dinged by the PDC for failing to include notice language in radio campaign advertisements and for failing to timely file expense paperwork.

Disagreements on Connors’ record

Connors is winning his reelection campaign.

He had 60% of votes cast so far while Petersen was trailing with 40%.

It’s unclear how much is left to count in the race. The Benton County Election Department estimates there are about 3,000 ballots left to tally.

Election results will be certified by Tuesday, Nov. 28.

We Want Accountability says its claims that Connors “voted with liberals,” “supports CRT” and “kept kids in masks” during the COVID pandemic are all true.

Annette Rose, the political organizer who put up the signs, writes that Connors has "voted with Ron Mabry on every single school policy that has been introduced in the past two years."

But in one example, Connors says that he voted differently than Mabry and another moderate school board member, Diane Sundvik, on a resolution to remove weighted voting for the Washington State School Directors' Association.

Connors also asserts that the board's unanimous decision to revise portions of its policy on race and the curriculum, commonly seen as a stance against CRT, was evidence that he does not support it.

But Rose says that policy isn't about CRT in schools because it doesn't mention the subject.

Connors supported CRT, she says, because he voted to keep a children's book by Ibram X. Kendi — "Antiracist Baby" — in school libraries.

Connors told the Herald this election cycle that he's against removing books that show a diversity of ideologies and perspectives.

Lastly, Rose asserts that Connors "kept our kids in masks" by following state COVID mandates and not being proactive enough in advocating for removing masks at the state level.

She mentions a grassroots letter that was signed by 150 Washington school board members and sent to Gov. Jay Inslee in February 2022, requesting him to lift a mandate that required all students and staff to wear masks. Connors did not sign on to the letter, Rose claims.

But Connors points to the recent Washington Supreme Court opinion about the Richland School Board recall, which states that local school boards do not have "discretionary power" to remove face masks or override state health mandates.

2 mascots were clear favorites in our reader poll for the new Pasco schools

OTTO GREULE JR • GETTY IMAGES
About 450 of you weighed in on your choices for Harvest View and Orion high schools.

BY ERIC ROSANE
EROSANE@TRICITYHERALD.COM

We asked Tri-City Herald readers to vote for their favorite mascots for the two new Tri-City high schools that will open in 2025.

About 450 of you weighed in on your thoughts for Pasco's new schools and voted in our polls — and there were two clear favorites.

If readers had it their way, it would be the Harvest View High School "Rattlers" and Orion High School "Archers."

The Rattlers were the clear favorite with 42% of the vote. A total of 139 readers chose this mascot as their top choice for Harvest View. Go Fightin' Rattlers!

But readers also showed some love for the Ravens (89 votes), the Cornhuskers (42), the River Otters (40) and the Combines (24).

The Archers garnered 35% of the vote, with 74 readers choosing this as their preferred mascot for Orion. Bullseye!

But they also loved the Pilots (44 votes), the Steelheads (41), the Rockets (32) and the Hunters (19).

COURTESY PASCO SCHOOL DISTRICT
An updated architectural rendering from Design West shows what the exterior of Orion High School in Pasco might look like when it opens in fall 2025.

Pasco School District is currently in the process of deciding branding details for Harvest View, including narrowing down ideas for the mascot and school colors. The district has started soliciting ideas and feedback from middle school and high school students in the school district.

Those concepts will be presented at the Tuesday, Nov. 14, school board meeting.

COURTESY PASCO SCHOOL DISTRICT
A rendering shows what Pasco School District's third comprehensive high school, Harvest View, might look like.

The construction of these two schools wouldn't be possible without voters approving a $195.5 million bond measure earlier this year.

Harvest View will be Pasco's third comprehensive high school. It will serve 2,000 students and offer a signature agriculture career and technical education program.

Contractors are entering their 17th week of construction of the school, at 6091 Burns Road.

Design and development of Orion High School is in its final stages, and construction at a lot along Salt Lake Street will begin in spring.

The career and college high school will serve 600 in-district students and will be similar to Delta High School. Graduates will leave the school workforce ready with credentials, industry certifications and hands-on experience.