

Richland Schools

Office of the Superintendent

Memorandum

Date: 12/01/23
To: School Board
From: Shelley Redinger
Subject: Friday Packet

Enclosed please find the following documents:

- Board Dates to Remember
- Clarification to Policy 2022 – Electronic Recourses and Internet Safety
- Policy 5011 - Sexual Harassment of District Staff Memo
- Informational Waiver of the Minimum 180-day School Year for K-5
- Melissa Gombosky Introduction
- Community Events/Activities
- Media



TO: Board of Directors
RE: Event Dates
DATE: 12/01/23

December:

- 12/12/23...Board Meeting-Board Room-6:30
- 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)

Friday Information Packet
December 1, 2023

AGENDA ITEM: Policy/RR No. 2022-Electronic Resources and Internet Safety

PURPOSE: Informational & Compliance

DOCUMENTS: Memo and Policy/Procedure 2022

FROM: Galt Pettett, General Counsel

During the last school board meeting I was asked about language contained in my “Board Agenda Detail” for Policy 2022 – Electronic Resources and Internet Safety. The specific language was, “The revisions also reflect new requirements for district library services and include a description of how the library information and technology programs will provide technology consultation, procurement, and training as prescribed in HB 1365. Lastly, the revisions include that the district will cooperate with OSPI to provide demographic, distribution, and other data, related to technology initiatives.”

House Bill (HB) 1365 was passed after all schools in Washington State were closed in March 2020 and educational institutions promptly shifted to offering education on-line. Shortly after districts made the switch to on-line education, it became apparent that there were large digital disparities between districts in Washington state and even between households within the same school district.

State leaders passed HB 1365 to address these disparities. The purpose of the legislation was to prioritize improving student access to learning devices, increase the training and technical assistance within districts to support student learning, and to provide schools and districts with the necessary technical support to give students the ability to access digital learning. Much of this work was passed to the Educational Services Districts (ESD) around the state. The state also increased the materials, Supplies and Operating Costs (MSOC) rate by \$25 per student to support broadband connectivity to students by districts.

While HB 1365 has policy implications, the language should not have been included in my Board Agenda Detail.



Educating Every Student for Success

BOARD AGENDA DETAIL

December 1, 2023

AGENDA ITEM: Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited – Policy 5011 – Annual Report

PURPOSE: Informational

DOCUMENTS: Policy 5011

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Policy 5011 includes a section that states, “The superintendent will make an annual report to the board reviewing the use and efficacy of this policy and related procedures. Recommendations for changes to this policy, if applicable, will be included in the report.”

The school board updated this policy in late May. I have met with Mr. Tim Praino and discussed the policy and procedure. The district has not processed any formal complaints since the policy was updated. Further, the Washington State School Directors’ Association has not made any changes to policy 5011. Therefore, the administration is not recommending any changes at this time.

FROM: Galt Pettett, General Counsel

Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited

The Richland School District (the "District") is committed to a positive and productive working environment free from discrimination, including sexual harassment. This commitment extends to all employees and other persons involved in academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities of the school, whether that program or activity is in a school facility, on school transportation, or at a class training held elsewhere.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment means unwelcome conduct or communication of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can occur student to adult, adult to adult or can be carried out by a group of students or adults and will be investigated by the District even if the alleged harasser is not a part of the school staff or student body. The District prohibits sexual harassment of district employees by other students, employees or third parties involved in school district activities.

Under federal and state law, the term "sexual harassment" includes:

- acts of sexual violence;
- unwelcome sexual or gender-directed conduct or communications that interferes with an individual's employment performance or creates an intimidation, hostile, or offensive environment;
- unwelcome sexual advances;
- unwelcome requests for sexual favors;
- sexual demands when submission is a stated or implied obtaining work opportunity or other benefit;
- sexual demands where submission or rejection is a factor in a work or other school-related decision affecting an individual.

A "hostile environment" for an employee is created where the unwanted conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidation, hostile, or abusive.

Investigation and Response

If the District knows, or reasonably should know, that sexual harassment has created a hostile environment, the District will promptly investigate to determine what occurred and will take appropriate steps to resolve the situation. If an investigation reveals that sexual harassment has created a hostile environment, the District will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end sexual harassment, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent its occurrence and, as appropriate, remedy its effects. The District will take prompt, equitable and remedial action within its authority every time a report, complaint and grievance alleging sexual harassment comes to the attention of the District, either formally or informally.

Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement and suspected child abuse will be reported to law enforcement or Child Protective Services. Regardless of whether the misconduct is reported to law enforcement, school staff will promptly investigate to determine what occurred and take appropriate steps to resolve the situation to the extent that such investigation does not interfere with an on-going criminal investigation. A criminal investigation

does not relieve the District of its independent obligation to investigate and resolve sexual harassment.

Engaging in sexual harassment will result in appropriate discipline or other appropriate sanctions against offending student, staff or third parties involved in school district activities. Anyone else who engages in sexual harassment on school property or at school activities will have their access to school property and activities restricted, as appropriate.

Retaliation and False Allegations

Retaliation against any person who makes or is a witness in a sexual harassment complaint is prohibited and will result in appropriate discipline. The District will take appropriate actions to protect involved persons from retaliation.

It is a violation of this policy to knowingly report false allegations of sexual harassment. Persons found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to appropriate discipline.

Staff Responsibilities

The superintendent will develop and implement formal and informal procedures for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints or reports of sexual harassment. The procedures will include reasonable and prompt timelines and delineate staff responsibilities under this policy.

Any school employee who witnesses sexual harassment or receives report, informal complaint, or written complaint about sexual harassment is responsible for informing the District's Title IX or Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. All staff are also responsible for directing Complainants to the formal complaint process.

This policy applies to sexual harassment (including sexual violence) targeted at employees carried out by a student, employee, or a third party involved in school district activities. A formal (written) complaint filed by an employee or filed by or on behalf of a student Complainant against an employee Respondent will be investigated under Policy 3205 and Procedure 3205.

Reports of discrimination and discriminatory harassment will be referred to the District's Title IX or Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. Reports of disability discrimination or harassment will be referred to the district's Section 504 Coordinator.

Notice and Training

The superintendent will develop procedures to provide information and education to district staff, parents and volunteers regarding this policy and the recognition and prevention of sexual harassment. At a minimum, sexual harassment recognition and prevention and the elements of this policy will be included in staff and regular volunteer orientation. This policy and the procedure, which includes the complaint process, will be posted in each district building in a place available to staff, parents, volunteers, and visitors. Information about the policy and procedure will be clearly stated and conspicuously posted throughout each school building, provided to each employee, and reproduce in each staff, volunteer, and parent handbook. Such

notices will identify the District's Title IX coordinator and provide contact information, including the coordinator's email address.

Policy Review

The superintendent will make an annual report to the board reviewing the use and efficacy of this policy and related procedures. Recommendations for changes to this policy, if applicable, will be included in the report. The superintendent is encouraged to involve staff, volunteers, and parents in the review process.

Legal References:	RCW 28A.640.020 Regulations, guidelines to eliminate discrimination — Scope — Sexual harassment policies WAC 392-190-058 Sexual harassment 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688
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Formerly Policy	8700 – Sexual Harassment
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RSD No. 400
Adopted: May 23, 2023

Procedure - Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited

This procedure is intended to set forth the requirements of Policy 5011, including the process for a prompt, thorough, and equitable investigation of allegations of sexual harassment and the need to take appropriate steps to resolve such situations. If sexual harassment is found to have created a hostile environment, staff must take immediate action to eliminate the harassment, prevent its reoccurrence, and address its effects.

This procedure applies to sexual harassment (including sexual violence) targeted at employees carried out by students, other employees or third parties involved in school district activities. The Richland School District (the "District") has jurisdiction over these complaints pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Chapter 28A.640, RCW and Chapter 392-190 WAC.

A formal complaint filed by or on behalf of a student Complainant will be investigated under the definitions, requirements, and procedures of Policy 3205 and Procedure 3205.

Notice

Information about the District's sexual harassment policy will be easily understandable and conspicuously posted throughout each school building, provided to each employee and reproduced in each staff, volunteer and parent handbook. In addition to the posting and reproduction of this procedure and Policy 5011, the District will provide annual notice to employees that complaints pursuant to this procedure may be filed at 6972 Keene Road, West Richland, WA 99353.

Staff Responsibilities

In the event of an alleged sexual assault, the school principal will immediately inform: 1) law enforcement and 2) the Title IX or Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator so that the District can appropriately respond to the incident consistent with its own grievance procedures. The principal will notify the targeted staff person of their right to file a criminal complaint and a sexual harassment complaint simultaneously.

Confidentiality

If a Complainant requests that his or her name not be revealed to the alleged perpetrator or asks that the District not investigate or seek action against the alleged perpetrator, the request will be forwarded to the Executive Director of Human Resources for evaluation. The Executive Director of Human Resources should inform the Complainant that honoring the request may limit its ability to respond fully to the incident, including pursuing disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator.

If the Complainant still requests that his or her name not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator or that the District not investigate or seek action against the alleged perpetrator, the District will need to determine whether or not it can honor such a request while still providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students, staff and other third parties engaging in district activities, including the person who reported the sexual harassment. Although a Complainant's request to have his or her name withheld may limit the District's ability to respond fully to an individual allegation of sexual harassment, the District will use other appropriate means available to address the sexual harassment.

Retaliation

Title IX prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a complaint under these laws or participates in a complaint investigation. When an informal or formal complaint of sexual harassment is made, the District will take steps to stop further harassment and prevent any retaliation against the person who made the complaint, was the subject of the harassment, or against those who provided information as a witness. The District will investigate all allegations of retaliation and take actions against those found to have retaliated.

Informal Complaint Process

Anyone may use informal procedures to report and resolve complaints of sexual harassment. Informal reports may be made to any staff member. Staff will always notify Complainants of their right to file a formal complaint and the process for same. Staff will also direct potential Complainants to the Executive Director of Human Resources at 509-967-6006. Additionally, staff will also inform an appropriate supervisor or professional staff member when they receive complaints of sexual harassment, especially when the complaint is beyond their training to resolve or alleges serious misconduct.

During the course of the informal complaint process, the District will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end any harassment and to correct any discriminatory effects on the Complainant. If an investigation is needed to determine what occurred, the District will take interim measures to protect the Complainant before the final outcome of the District's investigation (e.g., allowing the Complainant to change academic or extracurricular activities or break times to avoid contact with the alleged perpetrator). Informal remedies may include:

- An opportunity for the Complainant to explain to the alleged harasser that his or her conduct is unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate, either in writing or face-to-face;
- A statement from a staff member to the alleged harasser that the alleged conduct is not appropriate and could lead to discipline if proven or repeated;
- A general public statement from an administrator in a building reviewing the District sexual harassment policy without identifying the Complainant.
- Developing a safety plan;
- Separating staff person; or
- Providing staff and/or student training.

Informal complaints may become formal complaints at the request of the Complainant, parent or guardian, or because the District believes the complaint needs to be more thoroughly investigated. The District will inform the Complainant how to report any subsequent problems. Additionally, the District will conduct follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or instances of retaliation, and to promptly respond and appropriately address continuing or new problems. Follow-up inquiries will follow a timeline agreed to by the District and Complainant.

Formal Complaint Process**Level One – Complaint to District**

Anyone may initiate a formal complaint of sexual harassment, even if the informal complaint process is being utilized. At any level in the formal complaint process, the District will take

interim measures to protect the Complainant before the final outcome of the District's investigation. The following process will be followed:

Filing of Complaint

- All formal complaints will be in writing and will set forth the specific acts, conditions or circumstances alleged to have occurred and to constitute sexual harassment. The Title IX Coordinator may draft the complaint based on the report of the Complainant for the Complainant to review and approve. The superintendent or Title IX Coordinator may also conclude that the District needs to conduct an investigation based on information in his or her possession, regardless of the Complainant's interest in filing a complaint.
- The time period for filing a complaint is one year from the date of the occurrence that is the subject matter of the complaint. However, a complaint filing deadline may not be imposed if the complainant was prevented from filing due to: 1) Specific misrepresentations by the District that it had resolved the problem forming the basis of the complaint; or 2) Withholding of information that the district was required to provide under WAC 392-190-065 or WAC 392-190-005.
- Complaints may be submitted by mail, fax, e-mail or hand-delivery to the Title IX Coordinator, Tim Praino, the Executive Director of Human Resources at 6972 Keene Road, West Richland, WA 99353. Any district employee who receives a complaint that meets these criteria will promptly notify the Coordinator.

Investigation and Response

- The Title IX Coordinator will receive and investigate all formal, written complaints of sexual harassment or information in the Coordinator's possession that they believe requires further investigation. The Coordinator will delegate his or her authority to participate in this process if such action is necessary to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Coordinator will provide the Complainant a copy of this procedure.
- Investigations will be carried out in a manner that is adequate in scope, reliable and impartial. During the investigation process, the Complainant and accused party or parties, if the Complainant has identified an accused harasser(s), will have an equal opportunity to present witnesses and relevant evidence. Complainants and witnesses may have a trusted adult with them during any district-initiated investigatory activities. The District and Complainant may also agree to resolve the complaint in lieu of an investigation.
- When the investigation is completed, the Coordinator will compile a full written report of the complaint and the results of the investigation.

Superintendent Response

- The superintendent must respond in writing to the Complainant and the alleged perpetrator within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the formal complaint, unless otherwise agreed to by the Complainant or if exceptional circumstances related to the complaint require an extension of the time limit. In the event an extension is needed, the District will notify the Complainant in writing of the reason for the extension and the anticipated response date. At the time the District responds to the Complainant, the District must send a copy of the response to the office of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

- The response of the superintendent or designee will include: 1) a summary of the results of the investigation; 2) a statement as to whether a preponderance of the evidence establishes that the Complainant was sexually harassed ; 3) if sexual harassment is found to have occurred, the corrective measures the district deems necessary, including assurance that the District will take steps to prevent recurrence and remedy its effects on the Complainant and others, if appropriate; 4) notice of the Complainant's right to appeal to the Board and the necessary filing information; and 5) any corrective measures the District will take, remedies for the Complainant (e.g., sources of counseling, advocacy and other support), and notice of potential sanctions for the perpetrator(s) (e.g., discipline).
- The superintendent's or designee's response will be provided in a language the Complainant can understand and may require language assistance for Complainants with limited English proficiency in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If the complaint alleges discriminatory harassment by a named party or parties, the coordinator will provide the accused party or parties with notice of the outcome of the investigation and notice of their right to appeal any discipline or corrective action imposed by the District.
- Any corrective measures deemed necessary will be instituted as quickly as possible, but in no event more than thirty (30) days after the superintendent's mailing of a written response, unless the accused is appealing the imposition of discipline and the District is barred by due process considerations or a lawful order from imposing the discipline until the appeal process is concluded. Staff may also pursue complaints through the appropriate collective bargaining agreement process or anti-discrimination policy.
- The District will inform the Complainant how to report any subsequent problems. Additionally, the District will conduct follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or instances of retaliation, and to promptly respond and appropriately address continuing or new problems. Follow-up inquiries will follow a timeline agreed to by the District and Complainant.

Level Two -Appeal to Board of Directors

Notice of Appeal and Hearing

- If a Complainant disagrees with the superintendent's or designee's written decision, the Complainant may appeal the decision to the District's Board of Directors (the "Board"), by filing a written notice of appeal with the secretary of the Board within ten (10) calendar days following the date upon which the complainant received the response.
- The Board will schedule a hearing to commence by the twentieth (20th) calendar day following the filing of the written notice of appeal, unless otherwise agreed to by the Complainant and the superintendent or for good cause.
- Both parties will be allowed to present such witnesses and testimony as the board deems relevant and material.

Decision

- Unless otherwise agreed to by the Complainant, the Board will render a written decision within thirty (30) calendar days following the filing of the notice of appeal and provide the Complainant with a copy of the decision.

- The decision will be provided in a language that the Complainant can understand which may require language assistance for Complainants with limited English proficiency in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
- The decision will include notice of the Complainant's right to appeal to the OSPI and will identify where and to whom the appeal must be filed. The District will send a copy of the appeal decision to the OSPI.

Level Three - Complaint to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Filing of Complaint

- If a Complainant disagrees with the decision of the Board, or if the District fails to comply with this procedure, the Complainant may file a complaint with the OSPI.
- A complaint must be received by the OSPI on or before the twentieth (20) calendar day following the date upon which the Complainant received written notice of the Board's decision, unless the OSPI grants an extension for good cause. Complaints may be submitted by mail, fax, electronic mail, or hand delivery.
- A Complaint must be in writing and include: 1) A description of the specific acts, conditions or circumstances alleged to violate applicable anti-sexual harassment laws; 2) The name and contact information, including address, of the Complainant; 3) The name and address of the district subject to the complaint; 4) A copy of the District's complaint and appeal decision, if any; and 5) A proposed resolution of the complaint or relief requested. If the allegations regard a specific student, the complaint must also include the name and address of the student, or in the case of a homeless child or youth, contact information.

Investigation, Determination and Corrective Action

- Upon receipt of a complaint, the OSPI may initiate an investigation, which may include conducting an independent on-site review. OSPI may also investigate additional issues related to the complaint that were not included in the initial complaint or appeal to the superintendent or board.
- Following the investigation, OSPI will make an independent determination as to whether the District has failed to comply with RCW 28A.642.010 or Chapter 392-190, WAC and will issue a written decision to the Complainant and the District that addresses each allegation in the complaint and any other noncompliance issues it has identified. The written decision will include corrective actions deemed necessary to correct noncompliance and documentation the district must provide to demonstrate that corrective action has been completed.
- All corrective actions must be completed within the timelines established by OSPI in the written decision unless OSPI grants an extension. If timely compliance is not achieved, OSPI may take action including but not limited to referring the District to appropriate state or federal agencies empowered to order compliance.

A complaint may be resolved at any time when, before the completion of the investigation, the District voluntarily agrees to resolve the complaint. OSPI may provide technical assistance and dispute resolution methods to resolve a complaint.

Level Four - Administrative Hearing

A Complainant or District that desires to appeal the written decision of the OSPI may file a written notice of appeal with OSPI within thirty (30) calendar days following the date of receipt of that office's written decision. OSPI will conduct a formal administrative hearing in conformance with the Administrative Procedures Act, Chapter 34.05, RCW.

Other Complaint Options

Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education

OCR enforces several federal civil rights laws, which prohibit discrimination in public schools on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age. File complaints with OCR within 180 calendar days of the date of the alleged discrimination.

206-607-1600 | TDD: 1-800-877-8339 | OCR.Seattle@ed.gov | www.ed.gov/ocr

Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC)

WSHRC enforces the Washington Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49.60), which prohibits discrimination in employment and in places of public accommodation, including schools. File complaints with WSHRC within six months of the date of the alleged discrimination.

1-800-233-3247 | TTY: 1-800-300-7525 | www.hum.wa.gov

Mediation

At any time during the complaint procedure set forth in WAC 392-190-065 through 392-190-075, a district may, at its own expense, offer mediation. The Complainant and the District may agree to extend the complaint process deadlines in order to pursue mediation.

The purpose of mediation is to provide both the Complainant and the District an opportunity to resolve disputes and reach a mutually acceptable agreement through the use of an impartial mediator. Mediation must be voluntary and requires the mutual agreement of both parties. It may be terminated by either party at any time during the mediation process. It may not be used to deny or delay a Complainant's right to utilize the complaint procedures.

Mediation must be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who may not: 1) Be an employee of any school district, public charter school, or other public or private agency that is providing education related services to a student who is the subject of the complaint being mediated; or

2) Have a personal or professional conflict of interest. A mediator is not considered an employee of a school district or charter school or other public or private agency solely because he or she serves as a mediator.

If the parties reach agreement through mediation, they may execute a legally binding agreement that sets forth the resolution and states that all discussions that occurred during the course of mediation will remain confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent complaint, due process hearing or civil proceeding. The agreement must be signed by the Complainant and a district representative who has authority to bind the District.

Training and Orientation

A fixed component of all district orientation sessions for staff, students and regular volunteers will introduce the elements of this policy. Staff will be provided information on recognizing and

preventing sexual harassment. Staff will be fully informed of the formal and informal complaint processes and their roles and responsibilities under the policy and procedure.

Certificated staff will be reminded of their legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse, and how that responsibility may be implicated by some allegations of sexual harassment. Regular volunteers will get the portions of this component of orientation relevant to their rights and responsibilities.

Students will be provided with age-appropriate information on the recognition and prevention of sexual harassment and their rights and responsibilities under this and other district policies and rules at student orientation sessions and on other appropriate occasions, which may include parents.

As part of the information on the recognition and prevention of sexual harassment staff, volunteers, students and parents will be informed that sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Demands for sexual favors in exchange for preferential treatment or something of value;
- Stating or implying that a person will lose something if he or she does not submit to a sexual request;
- Penalizing a person for refusing to submit to a sexual advance, or providing a benefit to someone who does;
- Making unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate sexually suggestive remarks comments, gestures, or jokes; or remarks of a sexual nature about a person's appearance, gender or conduct;
- Using derogatory sexual terms for a person;
- Standing too close, inappropriately touching, cornering or stalking a person; or
- Displaying offensive or inappropriate sexual illustrations on school property.

Policy and Procedure Review

Annually, the superintendent or designee will convene an ad hoc committee composed of representatives of certificated and classified staff, volunteers, students and parents to review the use and efficacy of this policy and procedure. The Title IX or Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator will be included in the committee. Based on the review of the committee, the superintendent will prepare a report to the Board including, if necessary, any recommended policy changes. The superintendent will consider adopting changes to this procedure if recommended by the committee.

Friday Information Packet
December 1, 2023

AGENDA ITEM: Waiver of the Minimum 180-day School Year for Grades K-5

PURPOSE: Informational & Compliance

DOCUMENTS: Memo and Resolution No. 968

FROM: Brian Moore, Assistant Superintendent

Background Information:

Before 2015 – the format for our Elementary School Parent/Teacher Conferences included ten ½-day Early Releases (1 week in the fall and 1 week in the spring) where conferences were available to parents each afternoon. This model does not require a waiver.

Since 2015, our elementary schools have had a waiver from the 180-day requirement for the purposes of Parent/Teacher Conferences. These waivers were provided by the state to support better continuity of school days (more full days of learning) and more options for parents to participate. These full days of conferences allow teachers to be available to conference with parents in the morning, afternoon, and at least one evening.

School districts can waive up to five (5) school days during the regular 180-day school year for the purpose of conducting parent-teacher conferences. The waiver can be effective for up to three years and is renewable. The district must continue to meet the annual instructional hour requirement described in [RCW 28A.150.220](#).

Our current waiver concludes at the end of the 2023-24 school year. We are seeking board approval and resolution to apply for another 3-year waiver for conference days (2.5 fall and 2.5 spring). Richland School District continues to exceed the minimum instructional hours requirement of RCW 28A.150.220(2) under the waiver plan. For this school year, Richland School District's District-Wide Annual 1051 instructional hours exceeds the minimum requirement of 1027 average hours.

Melissa Gombosky Introduction

Background

Melissa Gombosky is the principal advocate and owner of Gombosky Public Affairs. Melissa's bipartisan approach to advocacy before the Washington State Legislature and Office of the Governor has resulted in public policy improvements for her clients. Her work is focused primarily on K12 policy and finance. She has advocated for students in the Richland School District for special education, transportation, staffing, and capital funding so educators in the district have resources to serve students and families. In addition to proactively advocating for appropriate funding and policy, Melissa also works with the RSD leadership team and superintendent to educate lawmakers about any state-level mandates that take away local control from the school board.

Partnership with Richland School District

While advocacy activities vary from week to week depending on the needs of the district, Melissa engages with the leadership team and board members:

- Regular Zoom or call check-in with the Superintendent and leadership team
- Weekly bill tracker with links to all proposed policy and funding bills with K12 impact
- Maintains positive relationships with local lawmakers as well as state-level legislative leadership
- Weekly meetings with OSPI, Office of the Governor, and K12 policy chairs during the legislative session
- Support for direct superintendent outreach to lawmakers, Office of the Governor, and any appropriate state agency
- Draft legislation and any needed legislation with legislative staff to support the mission of the RSD

Gombosky Public Affairs

Prior to her lobbying work, Melissa was a classroom teacher in the Mead School District. She left the classroom when her husband's job moved their family to Olympia full-time. She continued her work in education by advocating for public policy improvements for school districts and students. In addition to her K12 work Melissa's work resulted in policy improvements for current and past clients including securing funding for Washington's minor league baseball teams' facility improvements through the 2023 Capital Budget. On behalf of Microsoft, Melissa lobbied the first in the nation facial recognition and data privacy bills and she continues to work on behalf of a number of national business clients to protect and advance their policy goals. She has served on the boards for the Boys and Girls Clubs and the Olympia School District Foundation in Thurston County. Melissa and her husband Jeff, live in Olympia and have two adult sons. In her free time, she enjoys scuba diving and is a PADI-certified dive master.

Melissa Gombosky | [Gombosky Public Affairs](#) | 360.878.0783

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.

December

Friday 1st:

- Santa Selfie and Cookie Workshop
9 AM - 4 PM
Early Learning Center
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050C4DA9A922A4F85-46042729-photos#/>

- Festive Family Night
5 – 7 PM
Jefferson Elementary
- Winterfest at Wiley
6 – 7:30 PM
William Wiley Elementary
- Choir Holiday Concert
6:30 – 8:15 PM
Hanford High School

Saturday 2nd:

- 40th Annual Holiday Bazaar
8 AM – 3 PM
Badger Mountain Elementary

Wednesday 6th:

- Asking is Caring Presentation
5 – 7 PM
Jefferson Elementary

Thursday 7th:

- Winter Wonderland Literacy Night
5 – 6:30 PM
Lewis & Clark Elementary

Friday 8th:

- Carols and Cocoa
7:15 – 7:50 AM
Chief Jo Middle School

Friday 8th:

- Grinchmas Cookie Decorating Party
5:30 – 7:30 PM
White Bluffs Commons
<https://white-bluffs-ptd-2.square.site/product/gingerbreadcookie%20night/48?cs=true&cst=custom>

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

Friday 15th:

- Holiday Sing-Along
9:15 – 10 AM
Tapteal Elementary Commons
- Family Fun Night Bingo
Marcus Whitman

Hanford + Richland High School Athletics Calendars

<https://hanfordathletics.com/events>

<https://bomberathletics.com/events>

Richland High mourns death of senior killed in wreck. Teen driver may face charges

BY CORY MCCOY
CMCCOY@TRICITYHERALD.COM

Richland, WA

Richland High School students are in mourning after the death of a senior just days before Thanksgiving.

Maria Vasquez Reyes, 17, was killed [Tuesday afternoon in a wreck](#) on the Highway 240 bypass off-ramp to Interstate 182, heading east.

“Our entire Richland School District community is mourning the sudden loss of Richland High School 12th grade student, Maria Vasquez Reyes,” Richland Schools Public Information Officer Shawna Dinh told the Herald in a statement.

“The loss of a young life is always a profound tragedy, and we are committed to providing support to our students, staff and Maria’s family as we grieve together. We ask for privacy for Maria’s family during this incredibly difficult time.”

Washington State Patrol said the Infiniti G35 being driven by Celcilo Romero, 18, left the roadway and rolled while heading toward the I-182 interchange.

The wreck left the eastbound lanes closed for several hours and snarled traffic heading into the after-work commute.

Benton County Coroner Bill Leach told the Herald that Vasquez Reyes was in the front passenger seat and wearing a seat belt. She died at the scene.

A 17-year-old male passenger, who has not been identified, was also hurt in the crash.

Romero and the other teen were taken to a local hospital. Romero had severe injuries, and the other teen was treated for minor injuries, WSP Trooper Chris Thorson told the Herald.

Romero could be facing charges, according to the WSP crash report.

Thorson said that state patrol investigators are interviewing multiple witnesses and the surviving passenger to come to determine what happened before a charging recommendation is sent to prosecutors.

He said it may be a week or two before the investigation is wrapped up.

This was the [second fatal wreck on Highway 240](#) in the past week. The other happened about 17 miles north of Richland Sunday morning.

The driver in that crash, Jorge Procopio Marcelino, 22, is in the Benton County jail on suspicion of vehicular manslaughter.

Investigators believe he was drunk and possibly on depressants when he crashed his Toyota Scion around 2:30 a.m., killing one of his passengers, Florentino Jacinto Santos, 30, of Mattawa.

Pasco 'Hall of Fame' administrator, who oversaw construction of several schools, dies



TRI-CITY HERALD FILE PHOTO

Tom Brandon, former director of operations for the Pasco School District, stands outside Longfellow Elementary School in Pasco in this 1999 file photo. He attended kindergarten at the first Longfellow Elementary in 1948.

BY ERIC ROSANE
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A lifelong Pasco resident, who oversaw construction of several local schools during a time of overwhelming growth, has died.

Tom Brandon died Friday, Nov. 24. He was 80.

The 1961 Pasco High School graduate went on to work for the Pasco School District for more than 40 years before retiring in 2009 after a tenure spent as an administrator and project manager.

He spent more than half his life either as a student or in service of the Pasco School District, advocating for the construction of new facilities and schools.

Toward the end of his tenure, Brandon worked as the district's project manager on the construction of Chiawana High School.

He grew up in Pasco and played football, basketball and baseball before attending Columbia Basin College and then Western Washington College in Bellingham.

After returning to his hometown, Brandon coached basketball and taught at McLoughlin Middle School. He later served as principal at Captain Gray Elementary and eventually as the school district's executive director for general operations.

In the 1990s, Brandon oversaw much of the construction of new schools. He was well known throughout Washington state as a school planner.



He was inducted in [1996 into the Pasco High School Hall of Fame](#).

In 2013, he and his wife, Carolyn Brandon, [celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary](#). They met while attending Pasco Jr. High School in 1958 and married in 1962 following graduation.

Mueller's Tri-Cities Funeral Home is handling his funeral arrangements.

2 students arrested after guns found in backpacks at Kamiakin, Hanford high schools

BY ERIC ROSANE
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At least three guns were seized Monday from the backpacks of two students at high schools in Richland and Kennewick.

A 14-year-old Kamiakin High School student was removed from class and arrested on suspicion of bringing two loaded handguns to school, said Kennewick police.

And a Hanford High School student was arrested earlier on investigation of having a handgun on the Richland school's campus.

Tipsters in both incidents had notified school staff or security officers that the students may have weapons.

"This is a good reminder for all school aged children: If they see or hear something that could be a threat, they should report it to trusted adults so it can be safely investigated and addressed, keeping everyone safe," said a release from Kennewick Commander Aaron Clem.

Just before 2 p.m., a Kamiakin school resource officer and security official removed a student from class after receiving reports he was possibly armed.

Officers found two handguns with loaded magazines during a search of his backpack, said the news release.

He was arrested and booked into the Benton Franklin Juvenile Justice Center in Kennewick on suspicion of possessing a dangerous weapon on school grounds and unlawful possession of a gun.

Clem said the student did not make any reported threats to any students or staff.

Earlier Tuesday morning, Hanford High School was locked down for a short time after Richland police received an anonymous tip about a student who was allegedly selling vapes, drugs and weapons on the campus, according to an email alert sent to parents.

After Hanford administrators were informed, a school resource officer and security personnel confronted the student, who arrived to campus late. A search revealed a gun in his backpack, and the student was arrested.

No other weapons or drugs were found, said the statement.

The lock down was lifted around 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday was the second day in the last two weeks that Tri-Cities police were tipped off that a student might have a weapon on campus.

Last week, on Nov. 20, police found a “very realistic” BB gun in a Richland High School student’s waistband after receiving a tip.

That student also was booked into the juvenile center on suspicion of possessing a dangerous weapon on school property and was expelled from school.

The names of all three students were not released by police and were not immediately available from the court.

Anyone with information about the incidents can call the police non-emergency number 509-628-0333 or send an anonymous tip online at www.kpdtips.com.
