



**Board Work Session Minutes
Monday, February 26, 2024**

The Board of Directors held a Work Session on Monday, February 26, 2024. The meeting began at 6 pm and was held at District Office. Directors Cannon, Gray, Burchard, Nolan and Killman were present. Also attending were Superintendent Travis Hanson, Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson and Assistant Superintendent Heather Havens.

I. Approval of the Agenda

Director Nolan made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended (Item V - *Open Government Trainings* and Item VI - *Levy Follow-Up Discussion* were reversed). Director Burchard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

II. Review of Procedure 2021 – Library Media Center

Learning & Teaching Assistant Superintendent Heather Havens, in reference to the processes set forth for review of library materials in Procedure 2021 and a recent library materials situation at Mt. Spokane High School, shared the following:

- **Historical Information** – At a board meeting in September 2022, Learning & Teaching did a presentation on the information included in Policy & Procedure 2021. In putting together this report it became evident the district's process for regular collection assessment had been neglected. This was due, primarily, to budget reductions. For a number of years there were no librarians at any school in the district. Instead, libraries were staffed with a para-educator. Today there is a full-time LIT at each elementary school, with the exception of Creekside who has a half-time LIT. Secondary schools still do not have librarians and continue to be staffed with a full-time para-educator.

To address the need to put a more formal process in place to assure regular collection assessment, Learning & Teaching, in the Spring of 2023, researched weeding practices and put a timeline in place to provide training and begin the deselection process in the 2023/2024 school year. This included the goal of tackling a library category each month.

Prior to the 2023/2024 school year the purchase of library materials was done in a variety of ways including recommendations from parents, students, teachers and community members. Purchases were sometimes paid for out of building budgets and sometimes with district funds. Starting in the current 2023/2024 school year the purchase of all library materials must be approved by Learning & Teaching and before donated items are added to a collection they must be reviewed/approved by Learning & Teaching.

Included in the September 2022 report to the board was information on the ability to view the library collection housed at each school online. This resulted in six formal requests for reconsideration in 2023. Prior to 2023, while there had been informal inquiries, there had never been a formal request for reconsideration.

- **Recent Book Related Incident at Mt. Spokane High School** – On Monday, January 22nd the Mt. Spokane principal heard from a parent who shared a concern regarding a book on display in the school library. After consulting with Learning & Teaching, the book was removed for review on January 23rd and the parent was informed of the action taken.

The book in question (added to the Mt. Spokane collection ten years ago) raised concerns there could, unknowingly, be other books of a sexually explicit nature in libraries. To address this concern the district, as a starting point, consulted the American Library Association website for a list of challenged books in the past ten years and, via an email sent by the district librarian, asked elementary LITs and secondary library para-educators to pull books from the list for review. The intent was for only books that had not been previously reviewed and/or were not already approved parts of district curriculum to be pulled for review, not the entire list. Unfortunately, that message was not clearly communicated. This resulted in alarm/concern that Mead was removing books like *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Of Mice & Men* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*. This miscommunication created confusion and found its way to social media. The district, to explain/clarify the situation, sent an email communication to parents and staff on Friday, January 25th referencing the miscommunication and assuring books like *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Of Mice & Men* and *To Kill A Mockingbird* were not being removed from Mead libraries.

- **Moving Forward** - As a result of the recent book situation at Mt. Spokane High School all communication having to do with Mead School District library collections will be sent from a Learning & Teaching administrator, not the district librarian who is a certificated teacher not an administrator.

The district will continue deselection training and the systematic weeding of library collections.

The library website will be updated and will include a Q & A section. Additionally, a library pamphlet will be produced that includes an explanation of the district's weeding process.

Regarding current Procedure 2021, a revision will be proposed in the section that references historical information on when and why a particular book was purchased/included in the collection. This information can be provided beginning in September 2023 but is not consistently available prior to that date.

General areas of discussion/questions included whether or not the policy and procedure should be broadly revised, clarification of the library chain of command and duties/responsibilities of the current district librarian. Elementary LITS and library para-educators are supervised by building principals not the district librarian. How the parent approval book check-out process works was explained and additional information was shared on how it came to be that the book at Mt. Spokane was displayed.

While it is hoped the initial deselection/weeding process can be completed by June that deadline may need to be extended because of the size of some school collections. In subsequent years this process will take less time. The board will be regularly updated on the deselection/weeding process.

III. Audit Entrance/Exit Conferences Discussion

After hearing an explanation of what transpires at an Audit Entrance Conference, Audit Exit Conference and Risk Assessment phone call from Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson, it was the consensus of the board to forego attending a formal Audit Entrance Conference. President Cannon and Director Nolan will attend the Audit Exit Conference and Director Burchard will represent the board on the Risk Assessment phone call.

IV. Union Stadium Fees Continued Discussion

Superintendent Hanson noted Union Stadium Fees was a discussion item at the January 22, 2024 Work Session. Continuing discussion centered around programs/groups that fall under Group I

on the Union Stadium Fee Schedule. This category would include both the Mead High School and Mt. Spokane High School lacrosse programs, provided they are members of the State League. Both programs serve students who reside in the Mead School District.

The fee schedule for Group I currently states *Home Event - NC*. The district has been interpreting this to mean a single home event. Changing *Event* to *Events* would allow Mead High School and Mt. Spokane High School lacrosse programs, provided they are members of the State League, to use Union Stadium for all home events based on Group I fees. The board was in favor of allowing each home event to qualify under the Group I fee category and noted the topic could be revisited in the future.

There was also discussion on the idea/possibility of providing complimentary tickets to members of the community to various performing arts and athletic events.

V. Levy Follow-Up Discussion

Superintendent Hanson reviewed not only Mead School District election results but also those of other local school districts. Although slightly higher than in 2021, Mead's pass rate of 53% is historically low. This low levy pass rate is not unique to the Mead School District. The highest levy pass rate in the region was 55% with no local school district passing a bond measure at the required 60% threshold. Moses Lake and Tahoma levies failed - both were at 49%.

A draft survey regarding the recent levy ballot measure was reviewed and the board was asked in the next few days to provide any suggested revisions. In the next few weeks a link to the survey will be emailed to district families and advertised to the community at large via an upcoming *Mead Matters* and/or standalone postcard. Other area school districts also plan to survey their communities for feedback.

With tax collections for the newly approved levy not starting until 2025 the district will need to be conservative with its 2024/25 school year budget. Moving forward it will be important to focus on restoring fund balance that has been depleted over the past few years. Planning for new curriculum and safety upgrades will take place in the upcoming 2024/25 school year with purchases starting in the 2025/26 school year.

The importance of *right sizing* was discussed, as was the possibility of needing to declare a financial emergency for the upcoming school year based on the fact that new levy monies won't start being collected until April 2025.

VI. Open Government Trainings (Per Policy 1805)

As set forth in Policy 1805, board members participated in required Open Government Trainings. This training was facilitated by Superintendent Travis Hanson.

VII. February 12, 2024 First Reading Policy Revisions/Adoptions Discussion

At the February 12, 2024 Regular Board Meeting, Policy 3141 (Non-Resident Students) and Procedure 3131 (Assignment to Schools) were presented for first reading revision consideration. Policy/Procedure 4400 (Election Activities) and Policy/Procedure 4218 (Language Access) were presented for first reading adoption consideration.

Following discussion/review of the policies and procedures that were presented for first reading consideration on February 12th, President Cannon confirmed Procedure 3131, Policy/Procedure 4400 and Policy/Procedure 4218 can be brought forward for action via Consent Agenda on March 11, 2024.

The board requested the revision to Policy 3141 (Non-Resident Students) be brought forward for second reading consideration as a standalone, *Continuing Business*, action item. The board asked that revised language be presented in paragraph two of the policy replacing references to

balanced enrollment with wording that assures, wherever space and staffing allow, that the district will consider all requests for non-resident enrollment on an equal basis, except as noted in the policy.

VIII. Student Travel (Policy 2152) Continued Discussion

Following up on discussion from the January 22, 2024 Work Session regarding Policy 2152 and the section that states: *“As a general rule, a Special Event Trip, such as a trip by a high school band to Disneyland, will be approved for a group once every four years.”*, Superintendent Hanson noted the board has recently approved Special Event trips on a yearly basis for both Mead High School Cheer and Mead High School Volleyball. He additionally shared he met with both high school band directors who shared it would be their preference the policy be revised to remove the *“every four years”* reference.

The requirements of House Bill 1660 were referenced with the notation that it could be unlawful to pass on costs for students who are unable to pay to booster organizations. Superintendent Hanson will check into this. The \$19,000 travel deficit that currently exists for the band program at Mt. Spokane High School was also noted. It was recommended a policy revision wait while Superintendent Hanson conducts additional research/fact finding.

IX. Executive Session

At 9 pm President Cannon called for an Executive Session of approximately one hour for the purpose of reviewing pending litigation and reviewing the performance of a public employee.

At 10 pm President Cannon returned the meeting to Open Session. No other business was discussed and no action was taken.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10 pm.

President

Secretary