

# Richland Schools

## Office of the Superintendent

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### Memorandum

**Date:** 3/8/24  
**To:** School Board  
**From:** Shelley Redinger  
**Subject:** Friday Packet

Enclosed please find the following documents:

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



TO: Board of Directors  
RE: Event Dates  
DATE: 3/8/24

**March:**

- 3/12/24...Board Meeting-Board Room – 6:30 PM
  - Ex. Session – 5:30 PM
- 3/26/24...Board Meeting-Board Room – 6:30 PM
  - Ex. Session-(only if needed)

**April:**

- April 1-5...SPRING BREAK
- 4/9/24...Board Meeting-Board Room – 6:30 PM
  - Ex. Session-(only if needed)
- 4/23/24...Board Meeting-Board Room
  - Ex. Session-(only if needed)

**May:**

- 5/14/24...Board Meeting-Board Room – 6:30 PM
  - Ex. Session-(only if needed)
- 5/28/24...Board Meeting-Board Room – 6:30 PM
  - 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.

## March

### Friday 8<sup>th</sup>:

- The Addams Family  
7 PM  
Leona Libby Middle School  
<https://gofan.co/app/school/WA85702>

### Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>:

- Oedipus Performance (by Drama III)  
7 – 8 PM  
Hanford High School Auditorium
- The Addams Family  
7PM  
Leona Libby Middle School  
<https://gofan.co/app/school/WA85702>

### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>:

- Math & STEM Night  
5:30 – 7 PM  
Marcus Whitman Elementary

### Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>:

- The Addams Family  
6 PM  
Leona Libby Middle School  
<https://gofan.co/app/school/WA85702>
- Jazz Concert  
7 PM  
Hanford High School Auditorium

### Friday 15<sup>th</sup>:

- Bingo Night  
5:30 – 7:30 PM  
White Bluffs Commons
- The Addams Family  
7 PM  
Leona Libby Middle School  
<https://gofan.co/app/school/WA85702>

### Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>:

- Spring Craft Show  
9 AM – 3 PM  
Chief Jo Middle School Gym
- The Addams Family  
2 PM  
Leona Libby Middle School  
<https://gofan.co/app/school/WA85702>

### Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>:

- Band Concert  
7 PM  
Hanford High School Auditorium

### Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>:

- Jazz Concert  
7 PM  
Hanford High School Auditorium

**Hanford + Richland High School  
Athletics Calendars**

<https://hanfordathletics.com/events>  
<https://bomberathletics.com/events>

# Kennewick school bus union treasurer admits to stealing dues for more than 10 years



A Kennewick school union treasurer pleaded guilty to embezzling dues.

BY CAMERON PROBERT  
CPROBERT@TRICITYHERALD.COM

A Kennewick school employee has promised to repay \$14,000 after admitting to [years of stealing](#) cash from her bus driver union.

Karen Ann Steele, 64, the union's former treasurer, started this week by paying \$2,500 as part of an agreement that will keep her out of jail even after pleading guilty to second-degree theft.

Deputy Prosecutor Tyler Grandgeorge said in court that Steele's payment was one of the key reasons prosecutors agreed to a first-time offender sentence.

“Ms. Steele has been trying to make efforts to pay back the full amount,” he said, adding that she hasn’t been able to yet, but he appreciated the effort.

### **10-year-old theft**

Steele was initially accused of embezzling \$18,000 in union funds over the course of her 10 years as the treasurer, according to court documents.

She initially stepped into the role in 2013 and was the only person in charge of handling the chapter’s money. The dues paid by the employees are divided between Washington state and local union chapters.

Starting early in her tenure, she began using the union money to make thousands of dollars in purchases at various stores, including Rite Aide and Costco, according to Benton County court documents.

Chapter president Peggy Morgan discovered the missing money and reported it to police in March 2023.

Steele told investigators she used the fact that no one checked the finances to take money from the chapter’s account. She said she started stealing money after she was the victim of a scam and she owed a “substantial amount of money,” according to court documents.

She created a bank account where she would transfer the money and could take cash withdrawals using an ATM.

Steele admitted to Morgan that she took the money and tried to repay some of it.

## Sentencing deal

As part of the agreement, Steele will serve six months on probation and is required to pay \$14,000 in restitution to the [Kennewick Transportation](#) 103 chapter of the Public School Employees of Washington Local 1948. She still works for the district.

Grandgeorge said union officials are happy to get some of the money back and signed off on the agreement.

While Steele didn't talk during the sentencing, her attorney Karla Kane said her client is very sorry for her conduct.

"I think initially when it started, she had every intention of paying it back," Kane said. "She is going to work hard to pay it back."

Steele, who was initially charged with first-degree theft, has no criminal convictions. She faced up to two months in jail after pleading guilty.

The agreement called for her to be sentenced under a first-time offender waiver. Judge Jackie Shea Brown followed the agreement.

# Tri-Cities student accused of having explosive device

BY CORY MCCOY  
*CMCCOY@TRICITYHERALD.COM*

Kennewick, WA

A Tri-Cities high school student has been arrested for possession of an explosive device.

Kennewick police said the 17-year-old Southridge High School student was arrested Wednesday after another student reported they were concerned the boy had an explosive.

Kennewick School District's resource officer and Southridge staff worked with Kennewick police to investigate, and spoke to the student, according to a news release from Kennewick Police.

During the investigation it became clear there was no threat to the campus or any other schools in the area, and the student did not have the explosive device with him at school.

Investigators obtained a search warrant for a home in the 1400 block of South Harrison Street and found the device.

Kennewick Police Commander Isaac Merkl confirmed the device was a pipe bomb.

Richland Police Bomb Squad technicians disarmed the device and the student was booked into the Benton Franklin Juvenile Detention Center on suspicion of possession of an explosive device and manufacture of an incendiary device.

"This is a great example of, 'If you see something, say something.' We appreciate the courage it took for the student to come forward and report this," Merkl said in the news release.



# Livid parent accuses police of using kids as ‘bait’ to catch sex offender near school

BY CORY MCCOY  
CMCCOY@TRICITYHERALD.COM

A convicted sex offender is accused of driving by a Tri-Cities middle school more than two dozen times over the course of a week and allegedly exposing himself to at least two children.

And parents are furious that they weren't notified until after he was arrested.

Javier Ayala-Colin, 29, of Benton City, was arrested by the Benton County Sheriff's Office last week and charged with indecent exposure and failure to register as a sex offender.

On Feb. 22, a detective with a unit that specializes in violent crime prevention was called to Enterprise Middle School regarding an open West Richland police investigation.

The incident involved a student who reported a naked man in a black Subaru Impreza tried to lure her close to his car by asking for directions.

West Richland police were notified by the school and increased patrols in the area after the first report was made to them on Feb. 20. At one point they found the car and attempted to pull Ayala-Colin over, but he fled and they were unable to chase him because of state law restrictions on pursuits, according to a news release from the West Richland Police Department.

A student first reported the man asking for directions more than a week before, but it appears the school did not make a report about the initial encounter to WRPD, according to information released by the department.

After the sheriff's detective got involved, the man was quickly arrested and only then did the school notify other parents of what had happened.

When detectives searched his car they reported finding a plastic grocery bag with stuffed animals, a plastic dinosaur, cameras and rope.

Now parents are demanding answers from the school district on why officials remained silent for a week before West Richland police were asked to investigate.

## PARENTS OUTRAGED

Kristen Chapin, blasted the board Tuesday night for not warning parents sooner that a sex offender was trying to lure children and exposing himself. She questioned how the district could stay silent when children were at risk.

“Are you kidding me? Your job is to protect our students and I really don't care if the police department says, ‘Hey, can you just keep this under the rug? We don't want to mess up our investigation.’ Screw your investigation,” Chapin said.

She told the board she allowed her daughter to ride her bike home for the first time that week.

“You need to put our students first, every single time,” Chapin said. “Everyone in here has got an idea of what health and safety means for our kids. Not a one of them is going to say ‘health and safety means you find out about an unregistered sex offender in the area and you don't mention it to parents, so they send their kids home on their bikes for



sometimes a mile where any kind of skeezy perv (police are) trying to find can just grab our kids. (They were) using our kids as bait and you signed off on it.”

Chapin said she wanted to know who made the decision and whether they informed district leaders.

“At this point it looks to me like you all were in cahoots with the (police). You’re not Barney Fife. You’re here for one reason, and that’s to protect our kids,” Chapin continued. “That is irresponsible and if something happened, you can be sure you would be liable for it.”

Superintendent Shelley Redinger said she was not aware of the investigation until just before the message was sent to parents. She apologized and told the meeting’s attendees that she would ensure it does not happen again.

Benton County Prosecutor Eric Eisinger later told the Herald that as soon as his office was informed of what was happening, they worked with the sheriff’s office to quickly to get a warrant and file charges.

“When we were made aware of this, I assigned a deputy prosecutor right away and thankfully action was taken before anything worse happened,” he said.

## **LURING INVESTIGATION**

When the sheriff’s detective contacted the school, Enterprise Principal Sheldon Weddle told him that the man had first approached a student on the south side of the school on Feb. 13, according to court documents.

They were able to identify the man as Ayala-Colin and found an address for him in Benton City and one for his mother between West Richland and Benton City. They also found that he was a sex offender who had failed to register as required by Washington state law.

Ayala-Colin was required to register as a sex offender after a 2014 Benton County conviction for fourth-degree assault with sexual motivation, Kennewick Police Community Relations Officer Roman Trujillo told the Herald.

The first student reported that she was followed by a Hispanic man in a black car while walking to school. The man approached the girl at 7:35 a.m. asking for directions to Yoke’s Fresh Market.

She said he was wearing sunglasses but otherwise was completely naked. The girl was able to identify the car in a photo when interviewed by the detective nine days later. The student told police she thought the man was high, because he was slouched down in the seat and his eyes looked ‘sleepy and droopy,’ according to court documents.

She immediately called her mother after Ayala-Colin sped off.

The school resource officer attempted to locate the vehicle, but did not find it. Security camera footage showed Ayala-Colin’s car driving by the school four times between 7 and 8 a.m. on Feb. 13, according to court documents. This does not appear to have been reported to WRPD at the time.

The car also was shown driving by the school five times between 7 and 8 a.m. on Feb. 14 and again 17 times on Feb 20 during the same hours.

Officers were notified of the second incident on Feb. 20 and began increased patrols in the area that day, and Ayala-Colin ran when they attempted to pull him over, according to WRPD.

A week later, Ayala-Colin exposed himself to at least one other student before he was arrested.

A school employee, who the first student told about the the man asking directions, made the connection that this was likely the same person, according to the detective’s statement.

The second student was approached on Feb. 20, but the student described a similar driver and vehicle. She said the man was wearing a hoodie and asked for directions to Yoke's. She began to call her mother and he sped off.

The department showed the victims Ayala-Colin's driver's license photo, but they were unable to identify him that way, according to the department.

West Richland police then reached out to the sheriff's department for help identifying the man.

West Richland Police said in a Facebook post last Friday that they determined that the information could not be shared with the community in order to protect the investigation.

"Yesterday Benton County Sheriffs Office in collaboration with West Richland Police Department apprehended an individual who was attempting to lure students near Enterprise Middle School," the department said in the post.

"This was initially reported earlier in the week and was continually investigated until the arrest had been made. It was determined that information could not be shared in an effort to ensure the investigation was not hindered. Efforts were made during school hours to ensure safety of the students."

West Richland police later clarified that while Ayala-Colin did allegedly stop the girls to talk to them and exposed himself, he did not try to lure the victims into the vehicle or touch them.

After the sheriff's detective interviewed the victims Feb. 22, arrest warrants were obtained that day.

Ayala-Colin was found at his mother's home in the 31000 block of East Kennedy Road N.E. Police saw movement in the house and ordered him to come out, but he refused to. Dispatchers received a call from his mother, who told them that Ayala-Colin had called her and said he was "scared to come out because he didn't know the charges."

He came out of the house about 30 minutes later and was arrested.

Later that day the victims were asked to identify Ayala-Colin and both believed he was the same person.

The first victim thought it was, and became more sure when she was shown the sunglasses he had been wearing when arrested.

The second victim thought it was him, but said he might have been skinnier. The detective noted that Ayala-Colin had on three jackets at the time.

Richland School District has referred all questions about the incidents to West Richland police.

Ayala-Colin remains in the Benton County jail in lieu of \$10,000 bail and is due back in court this week.

[https://www.applevalleynewsnow.com/news/pasco-school-district-beginning-a-bilingual-sign-language-class-for-deaf-hard-of-hearing-students/article\\_abe8d132-da8d-11ee-bdd3-a74ae8a36e03.html](https://www.applevalleynewsnow.com/news/pasco-school-district-beginning-a-bilingual-sign-language-class-for-deaf-hard-of-hearing-students/article_abe8d132-da8d-11ee-bdd3-a74ae8a36e03.html)

## Pasco School District beginning a Bilingual Sign Language class for deaf, hard of hearing students

Monique Ledesma, Morgan Huff  
Mar 5, 2024

### MORE INFORMATION



PASCO, Wash. -- The Pasco School District announced an inclusive learning program to help students of all abilities make it to their educational finish line.

A deaf and hard of hearing, bilingual sign language English program. This program is available for students in preschool all the way up to high school.

The school district said this program will not only serve Tri-Cities students but will include Benton City, Prosser, Grandview and some cities in Oregon.

"It's really unique for us to have this program here and more than half of the students that are in this program are actually residents of Pasco." Pasco School District executive director Tracy Wilson said, "So we have a large community here of students."

Wilson said this isn't just an educational program. It will help students feel a sense of community, a sense of belongingness and inclusion.

Tracy Wilson said, "We really have a specialized staff, specialized training and coordinate with our state resources to ensure our students have full access to not just school but extracurricular activities."

ADVERTISING

The bilingual sign language program is also personal for Wilson because she said when she first started teaching in Pasco 30 years ago, she had a deaf student with an interpreter and noticed the lack of resources.

"We spent probably the last 30 years building our program. Helping kids feel connected and having those resources and not just for our deaf community but also the teachers and the community at large in Pasco." Tracy Wilson said.

With the help of these resources, three students who were a part of the program not only graduated high school but are now in college.

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**SPONSORED CONTENT**

## **If You Can Name 10 Of These Actors, You're Old**



By **Factable**

Are you an expert on Hollywood's leading actors? Take this quiz to see if you really know the iconic stars.



# Kennewick High student arrested, accused of bringing gun to school



BOB BRAWDY • TRI-CITY HERALD

Kennewick school officials said the gun that was brought to Kennewick High School on Monday was unloaded and that no one made any threats..

BY CAMERON PROBERT  
CPROBERT@TRICITYHERALD.COM

A Kennewick High School student was arrested and jailed Monday after bringing a gun to school.

School staff members learned about the gun in the student's backpack and contacted the school's resource officer, who is a Kennewick police officer, according to a post on the [Kennewick police Facebook page](#).

It's unclear how staff members knew about the firearm.

Kennewick school officials said that the gun was unloaded and no one made any threats.

"We want to let you know that one of our students arrived at school and after a search of their backpack a firearm was discovered," school district officials said.

Bringing any kind of weapon onto school grounds is against the law, so the student was arrested and booked into the Benton-Franklin Juvenile Detention Center, Kennewick police said.



*TRI-CITY HERALD FILE*

A sign on the main entrance of a Tri-Cities High School references the Revised Code of Washington that makes all school in the state of Washington off-limits to weapons.

Washington state law and school district policy requires a mandatory one-year expulsion for students who bring guns on to school premises.

“Please discuss this incident with your children to emphasize that it is against the law to bring weapons of any type to school,” Kennewick police said.

**North Franklin schools superintendent retiring June 30**





Jim Jacobs

Connell, WA

[North Franklin School District](#) Superintendent Jim Jacobs says he plans to retire at the end of the school year after nearly three decades of service to Connell students.

He made [the announcement at Monday's school board meeting](#), tendering his resignation effective June 30, 2024.

"I've had the opportunity to work with thousands of students, hundreds and hundreds of staff members and I've made memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life," he told the Tri-City Herald in a Tuesday interview.

Jacobs plans to travel and spend more time with his family. They plan to stay local to Franklin County.

"I'm confident that the school district is in a great space to transition to a new leader, and that the community and staff will be able to help support that transition. They shouldn't lose a single stride in the changeover," he said.

Jacobs has spent the past six years as the district's chief executive, overseeing the instruction of its 2,000 enrolled students. Throughout his 27-year tenure, Jacobs has also worked as a teacher, summer school director, elementary principal and junior high principal.

He worked a decade as principal of Robert L. Olds Junior High, and was selected in 2017 to succeed Gregg Taylor as superintendent.

Jacobs also served 21 years in the military, from 1988 to 2009, and retired as a National Guard officer. His career in the military and in public education overlapped for about a dozen years, he says.

"The district has been blessed with Jim's dedicated leadership for the past six years," said North Franklin School Board Chairperson Terry Utecht. "He is a true leader in every sense of the word. The board is deeply saddened to see him go, but we are confident that the district is in a very healthy position which will help facilitate a smooth transition."

The school board will now begin the long process to formally find, interview and hire Jacobs' successor.

The district will conduct an online survey seeking community feedback this week. A community forum is planned for 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 6, at the district office.

As superintendent, Jacobs earned a total salary of \$206,800 during the 2022-23 school year, [according to income data from Washington OSPI](#).



# Eastside teams want state titles, validation at Tacoma Dome



BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM

Richland celebrates a 84-60 victory over Kentwood during the quarterfinals game of the Class 4A state tournament at the Tacoma Dome on Thursday in Tacoma.

BY JON MANLEY  
JON.MANLEY@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM

They came from places east of the Cascades. Spokane. Yakima. The Tri-Cities.

They packed into buses and cars, traveling hundreds of miles to rainy Tacoma in search of two things: a shiny championship trophy and if it's not too much trouble, a little respect, please.

At the 3A and 4A state high school basketball tournaments at the Tacoma Dome, some of them might find both.

Geographically, politically, maybe even ideologically, living in eastern Washington can feel a bit like living in another state sometimes.

*“Hey, remember us? Your friends from the dry part of the state? We play basketball over here, too.”*

Just ask Mount Spokane guard Bode Gardner, who was part of an 82-58 rout of Mountlake Terrace in the 3A tournament quarterfinals on Thursday.

“We talk about it, I think, every day,” Gardner said. “It’s something that comes up in practice, like, ‘When we come over to the Dome, we’re gonna get no respect.’”

“We come here with a chip on our shoulder every year. We prove them wrong and I think this year we want to take it a step farther and win it all.”

Is this an east side year at the Tacoma Dome? It could be, based on what has transpired through two days. In the 4A boys bracket, Richland and Davis (Yakima) are both in the semifinals. In the 4A girls bracket, fifth-seeded Davis (Yakima) is in the semifinals.

Richland, the No. 7 seed, soundly defeated No. 2 Tahoma in the state regional round last weekend before another blowout win against Kentwood in the quarterfinal round on Thursday at the Tacoma Dome.

“The general opinion of eastside teams is we’re weak, we don’t play hard and we’re soft,” said Richland guard Landen Northrop. “To come over here and smack a westside team, it always feels good.”

Added Richland center Lucas Westerfield: “There’s a lot of talent over here, but we have a lot of talent, too.”

In the 3A boys bracket, there are some of the usual suspects: O’Dea, Rainier Beach and Eastside Catholic from Seattle’s Metro League. Mount Spokane, the No. 6 seed, is the lone non-Metro representative, and surely feels it has as good a shot as anyone in this year’s wide-open bracket — especially after Thursday’s convincing performance.

And in the 3A girls bracket, Mead (Spokane) is the top seed, and features guard Addison Wells-Morris, the daughter of former Gonzaga All-American Adam Morrison. How’s that for an east side legacy?

Teryn Gardner, part of Mead’s dynamic 1-2 punch alongside Wells-Morris, said it’s a pride thing.

“We want to represent Spokane well and all the Spokane-area teams who are really good,” she said after scoring 25 points in a win against Bonney Lake on Thursday. “Sometimes I felt like we get a little bit underlooked, so coming over here and being able to play and play how we play is just awesome to see and cool to represent Spokane in that way.”

Had they played ball in Seattle-Tacoma, would some of these teams have been seeded higher by the WIAA’s seeding committee? Mount Spokane’s players and coach David Wagenblast downplayed that aspect, but it’s easy to see they’re on a mission to prove some people wrong.

“You can’t deny the fact that the Metro has won,” Wagenblast said. “They’re a ton of fun to play. I think we bring a different style and we’re also a pretty dynamic team that doesn’t get seen as much, and therefore, we’ll be a little overlooked. So a six seed for us was a bit of a chip, if you will say, and our kids, I think they went out and showed they’re a pretty talented team.”

Davis guard Cesar Hernandez shared a similar sentiment.

“Everybody doubts us, but that just puts a chip on our shoulder to go out there,” he told The News Tribune on Thursday. “We know we can play against anybody that’s from this side of the mountains.”

## **PAST EAST SIDE WINNERS**

In Class 4A boys, Gonzaga Prep was the last east side team to win a state title. The Bullpups won back-to-back titles in 2018 and 2019. For 3A boys, it takes some digging into WIAA records to find the last east side state champion. If you guessed Othello in 1984, congratulations.

In Class 4A girls, Central Valley was the last east side school to win a state championship in 2020. In 3A girls, West Valley (Yakima) was the most recent winner in 2001.

If any or all of this year’s group of teams leave the Dome with a title, they can rest assured they’ll hit Interstate 90 with not just the trophy, but the validation they’re looking for, too.



# Richland boys roll to 4A quarterfinal win; Kamiakin girls fall to Davis



BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTRIUNE.COM

Richland's Lucas Westerfield (40) dunks the ball against the Kentwood Conquerors during the quarterfinals game of the Class 4A state tournament at the Tacoma Dome on Thursday in Tacoma.

BY JEFF MORROW  
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

The Richland boys basketball team introduced itself to the Tacoma Dome crowd late Thursday night in impressive fashion.

Shooting a sizzling 69 percent from the floor, the Bombers found open shooters early and often en route to beating Kentwood 84-60 in a WIAA Class 4A boys state tournament quarterfinal game.

And if you take away their paltry 3-for-11 from 3-point land, Richland looks even more impressive by shooting 79 percent from the floor on 2-point field goals.

With the victory, the Bombers advance to the semifinals and play Glacier Peak at 9 p.m. Friday.



“Trying to play man-to-man defense against us, we knew it was going to be hard,” said Richland coach Earl Streufert. “The zone matchup wasn’t good for them either.”



*BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM*

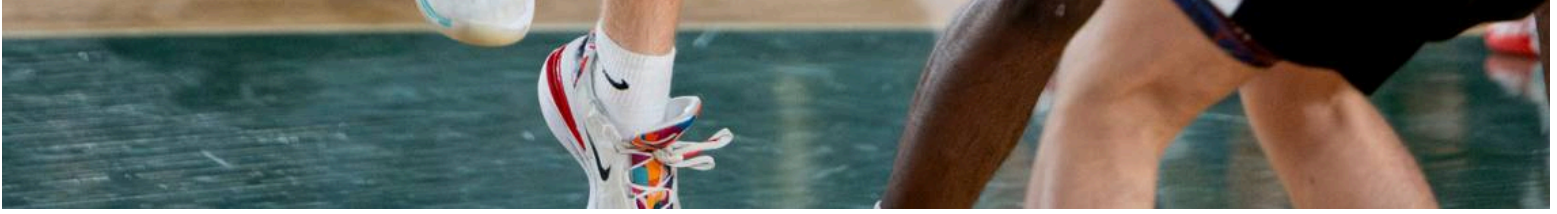
Richland's Lucas Westerfield (40) bats out the ball from Kentwood's Jaevieon Jamerson (13) and Kentwood's Yusof Edey (22) during the quarterfinals game of the Class 4A state tournament at the Tacoma Dome, on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, in Tacoma, Wash.

Jack Forbes led the way for Richland with 26 points and 2 blocked shots. But he had help.

“Jack was special to night,” added Streufert. “Over the last month, Jack has been playing so well for us.”

Luke Westerfield and Lance Horntvedt each added 18 points. Horntvedt, who grabbed 7 rebounds, was perfect from the floor — going 8-for-8, including 2-for-2 from the 3-point line.

Josh Woodard, normally the team's scoring leader, was satisfied with 10 points and 9 assists.



*BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM*

Richland's Joshua Woodard (12) goes to the basket against Kentwood during the quarterfinals game of the Class 4A state tournament at the Tacoma Dome, on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, in Tacoma, Wash.

The senior led the way in finding an open teammate all night.

In fact, the entire Bombers team did a great job of making that extra pass to a wide-open teammate for an easy layup all game. As a team, Richland was credited for an astounding 21 assists.

“They played super hard and shared the ball,” said Streufert. “Having 21 assists and shooting about 70 percent is pretty impressive. There were very few forced shots that we had.”



# Richland boys fall to Mount Si at 2024 state championships



BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTribune.COM

Richland Bombers fans cheer during the first half of the Class 4A state championship game against Mount Si at the Tacoma Dome on Saturday, March 2, 2024.

BY JEFF MORROW  
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Every time that the Richland boys basketball team made a run on Saturday, Mount Si seemed to have an answer.

In the end, the Bombers couldn't overcome the Wildcats, who won the WIAA 4A boys basketball state championship by a 72-58 score in the Tacoma Dome.



*BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM*

Richland's Joshua Woodard (12) shoots the ball during the second half of the Class 4A state championship game against Mount Si at the Tacoma Dome, on Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Tacoma, Wash.

“I’ve coached a lot of years,” said Richland coach Earl Streufert. “I was fortunate to play in a state title game for Walla Walla. And I’ve coached in three state title games (one for Walla Walla and now two for Richland). Some things are beyond your control. We ran into a really good team tonight.”



*BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM*

Mount Si's Trevor Hennig (4) floats it in against Richland's Lucas Westerfield (40) during the second half of the Class 4A state championship game at the Tacoma Dome, on Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Tacoma, Wash.

The Wildcats grabbed 36 rebounds — 16 on the offensive end — while the Bombers just had 23.

“They attacked (the boards),” said Streufert. “Their guards just attacked the boards.”





*BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTRIBUNE.COM*

Mount Si's Latt Ford (3) goes up against Richland's Lucas Westerfield (40) during the second half of the Class 4A state championship game at the Tacoma Dome, on Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Tacoma, Wash.

That 18-9 fourth quarter proved to be the key for Mount Si.

"We were only 5 points behind at the end of the third quarter," said Streufert. "We were in position to make a run. But their big three players are all really good. We had some tough turnovers. Mount Si was just a little bit better than us."



Trevor Hennig led Mount Si with 28 points, 9 rebounds and 4 assists; Jack Taylor added 18 points; and Blake Forrest had 17 points and 4 steals as the Wildcats finished the season with a 27-2 record.

Josh Woodard, playing his final game as a Richland Bomber, led the team with 20 points, 9 rebounds and 9 assists.



*BRIAN HAYES • BHAYES@THENEWSTribune.COM*

Mount Si's Blake Forrest (2) makes his way to the net while Richland's Landen Northrop (1) guards him during the first half of the Class 4A state championship game at the Tacoma Dome, on Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Tacoma, Wash.

Another senior, Luke Westerfield, finished with 14 points and 3 blocked shots.

"Luke was really good for three straight days," said Streufert.



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Richland Bombers watch as Mount Si Wildcats are announced during the first half of the Class 4A state championship game at the Tacoma Dome, on Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Tacoma, Wash.

“At the beginning of the year, (Richland assistant coach) Bruce (Robertson) and I thought that this team could be a state title contender,” said Streufert. “We have to give these kids credit. They got a lot better over this last month.”