

Richland Schools

Office of the Superintendent

Memorandum

Date: 4/12/24
To: School Board
From: Shelley Redinger
Subject: Friday Packet

Enclosed please find the following documents:

- Board Dates to Remember
- Community Events/Activities
- Summer School Offerings Memo
- Autism Walk Flyer
- Springfest Flyer
- Hanford Music Benefit Auction Flyer
- Media



TO: Board of Directors
RE: Event Dates
DATE: 4/12/24

April:

- **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)**

June:

- **6/11/24...Board Meeting-Board Room – 6:30 PM**
 - **Ex. Session-(only if needed)**
- **6/12/24...LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**
- **6/25/24...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.

April

Saturday 13th:

- PCOA and River's Edge Prom Car Wash Fundraiser
11 AM – 3 PM
2825 Queensgate Dr (Les Schwab)

Monday 15th:

- 4th Grade Salmon Summit
Columbia Park

Tuesday 16th:

- World Culture Day
3 – 4 PM
HomeLink Main Campus

Friday 19th:

- Hanford Music Benefit Auction
5:30 PM
40504 Demoss Rd., Benton City
<https://www.hanfordmusic.org/benefit-auction>
- Secondary Marimba Concert (Homelink)
6 – 7:30 PM
Richland High Auditorium
- *The Night Witches*
7:30 PM
HHS Black Box Theatre
<https://www.hanforddrama.org/>

Saturday 20th:

- Hanford Spring Bazaar
9 AM – 2 PM
Hanford High School
- *The Night Witches*
7:30 PM
HHS Black Box Theatre
<https://www.hanforddrama.org/>

Wednesday 24th:

- AAC Community Night
5:30 – 7 PM
TLAC Board Room
- *The Night Witches*
6 PM
HHS Black Box Theatre
<https://www.hanforddrama.org/>

Thursday 25th:

- Desert Sky Talent Show
6 PM
Desert Sky Cafeteria

Friday 26th:

- Spring Fundraising Social (Leona Libby)
6 – 9 PM
Taverna Tagaris
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/1af6582d-4db9-4f81-b99d-28e147a9bee4>
- *The Night Witches*
7:30 PM
HHS Black Box Theatre
<https://www.hanforddrama.org/>

Saturday 27th:

- *The Night Witches*
2 PM + 7:30 PM
HHS Black Box Theatre
<https://www.hanforddrama.org/>

May

Friday 3rd:

- *Legally Blonde the Musical*
7:30 PM
Hanford High Auditorium
<https://hanford.boottix.net/seating.php>

Saturday 4th:

- *Legally Blonde the Musical*
7:30 PM
Hanford High Auditorium
<https://hanford.boottix.net/seating.php>

**Hanford + Richland High School
Athletics Calendars**
<https://hanfordathletics.com/events>
<https://bomberathletics.com/events>



Date: April 12, 2024
To: School Board Members and Dr. Redinger
From: RSD Cabinet Members
Subject: Update - Summer School & Summer Offerings for 2024.

SUMMARY: Update the school board on the plans for summer programs offered to current K-12 students during the summer of 2024.

Elementary Summer Lego Lending Library:

We are excited to announce the launch of the Summer LEGO Lending Library. This program, geared toward our elementary students, aims to provide fun and enriching brain-boosting STEM activities while practicing problem-solving, critical thinking, and enhancing creativity. Families sign up via Google Forms (sent through Parent Square) to borrow LEGO BricQ Motion kits for two weeks.

We will prioritize registration to our Title elementary schools first, followed by open registration to the rest of the elementary schools for the remaining time slots available. The kits will include engaging STEM lessons and activities to explore. We have 50 kits and will run three sessions. Our goal is to serve 150 families throughout the summer. To centralize the check-out/check-in process and improve accessibility, we are working with our community partners at Richland Public Library and will have more details soon. Additionally, we are inviting high school robotics students to help prepare the kits and support the checkout/check-in process.

High School Information:

All current RSD students entering grades 9-12 can earn high school credit this summer at \$150.00 per 0.5 credit course. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch will have a reduced credit cost. RSD High School Summer School has been a long-standing tradition. This program allows students to make up credits and/or earn additional credits. Earning credits during the summer opens up their schedules to take additional classes during the school year. Certified teachers teach all courses online with in-person assistance at Richland High School. Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies classes are available. Careers and Financial

Literacy will be available in person at no cost to families. Registration information will be available on the district website. Students should contact their high school counselor to confirm the exact classes needed. Students are encouraged to register for one or two courses during the six weeks available. If a student requires another course throughout the summer and there is still time to complete it, they may request registration be reopened to add a course.

Special Education:

Extended School Year (ESY) Services will be offered at multiple sites Monday through Thursday, June 24 through July 25th. No services will be provided on Thursday, July 4th. The number of sites has yet to be finalized and will be based on the number of students identified as needing the services at each level. The number of sites will be limited to assist with staffing (Special Education, nursing, transportation, etc.). IEP Teams determine eligibility for ESY services and will develop an ESY plan for each student determined eligible for services to be carried out within the 5-week window. A certified Special Education Teacher will design the specially designed instruction for students. An IEP team may determine that services need to be provided outside of the 5-week timeframe based on individual student needs. Special education administrators are meeting with outside agencies to look at additional summer service options for our students.

Summer Activities & Athletics (District/Community)

Many opportunities are available for students to participate this summer through district-sponsored programs or local area organizations (Richland and West Richland). This list will continue to grow as summer gets closer.

- **Hanford High Fame Camp:** July 15-26 at Hanford High School. Open all incoming 7-9 grade students interested in learning how to act, sing, dance, and create technical theatre elements. Cost is \$375 per track (performance or technical). Scholarships are available. More information: <https://www.hanforddrama.org/famecamp>
- **Hanford High Summer Athletic Camps:** Coming soon. Learn more: <https://hanfordathletics.com/>
- **Richland Booster Club Girls Basketball Camp:** June 24-27 at Richland High School for students entering grades 1-8. This basketball camp will focus on teaching fundamentals and growing technical skill. All skill levels are welcome. Cost and time varies by grade. Learn more: <https://womensbasketball.bombercamps.com/>
- **Richland Bomber Lacrosse Youth Camp:** June 24-26 at Badger Mountain Park for incoming K-8 grade students. Beginners and experienced lacrosse players are welcome. Cost is \$80. Learn more: <https://lacrosse.bombercamps.com/index.cfm>
- **Richland Bomber Soccer Camp:** June 17-21 and 24-28 at Richland High practice fields for students ages 6-13. Increase your soccer skills and grow technically. Cost \$95 per session. Learn more: <https://soccer.bombercamps.com/>

- **Richland Bomber Swim Camp (after school):** May 28-June 6 at George Prout Pool for incoming K-8 grade students. Learn and develop technique and strokes. Cost is \$80. Learn more: <https://swim.bombercamps.com/>
- **Richland Bomber Volleyball Camps:** July 9-11 at Richland High School for incoming 2-8 grade students. Campers will learn basic skills and team concepts. Cost varies by grade. Learn more: <https://volleyball.bombercamps.com/volleyball-camps.cfm>
- **Academy of Children's Theatre Summer camps:** Various camps available June 17-August 10 for students in Pre-K through Grade 12. Learn more: <https://www.academyofchildrenstheatre.org/>
- **City of Richland Parks and Recreation Summer Program:** Coming soon. Learn more: <https://www.richlandparksandrec.com/>
- **CBRC Weekly Summer Camps:** June 13-August 23 for students ages 5-13. Weekly activities include art, swimming, fitness, rock climbing and more with an emphasis on increasing sportsmanship, teamwork and leadership skills. Two snacks provided, lunch available at an additional cost. Daily and weekly rates available. More information: <https://mycbrc.com/kids/kids-camp/>
- **Gallery at the Park Children's Workshops:** Various workshops available June 25-August 16 for students ages 7-14. Enhance your creativity in various art forms throughout the summer. Cost is \$100 per workshop. Learn more: <https://www.galleryatthepark.org/childrens-workshop>
- **Skyhawks Sports Camps:** Various camps throughout the summer for students of all ages. Learn more: <https://www.skyhawks.com/>
- **Sylvan Learning Center Academic Camps:** Richland enrollment coming soon. Learn more: <https://www.sylvanlearning.com/courses-camps/academic-camps/>
- **Tri-Cities Steel Drum Band Summer Sessions:** June 17 for marimba and steel drum classes or July 1 for steel drum only classes. Open to students in grades 4-12. \$90 per session. Learn more: <https://www.tcsba.org/summerclasses>

Community Partnerships - Boys & Girls Club

Boys and Girls Clubs of Benton and Franklin counties will again provide their summer camp options to families. Families that want to explore summer camp options for their students are encouraged to contact the BG Clubs for more information. BG Club Summer camps will be held at Badger Mountain, White Bluffs, Wiley, Sacajawea, Marcus Whitman, Lewis & Clark, and Orchard and they will be open 6am-6pm, Monday-Friday. For additional information, please go to www.greatclubs.org or call 509-543-9980. DSHS accepted, and scholarship opportunities are available.

Summer Meals

Plans are still being developed for specifics on sites and times. Decisions and communications coming in May 2024.



**Gather With Us - April 13, 2024 for our first annual
OUR AUTISM JOURNEY - BETTER TOGETHER
Event and Ceremonial Walk at the Benton County Fairgrounds -
Open to the Public!**

This walk and event aims to raise awareness about Autism in our community and encourage inclusivity, support, and involvement of individuals and families with Autism.

This community event is for everyone. It will include sensory friendly activities for all ages. This is an educational and interactive journey. The Better Together Autism Journey event runs from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm with the ceremonial walk beginning at 12:30 pm.

This event is being hosted by the Tri-Cities Autism Coalition, a local organization made up of parents, professionals and non-profit organizations. Our directors include representatives from The Arc of Tri-Cities, Spectrum Studios, United Family Center, The Kennewick School District, Columbia Industries, Caravel Autism Health, and Apollo Mechanical Contractors.

Scan for more info and to join!



Our Website



Our
Autism Journey
....Better Together

Reúnase con nosotros: 13 de abril de 2024 para nuestra primera reunión anual NUESTRO VIAJE AL AUTISMO - MEJOR JUNTOS
Evento y caminata ceremonial en los terrenos de la feria de Kennewick
¡abierto al público!

Este Evento de La Caminata Del Autismo tiene como objetivo despertar la concientización de la comunidad acerca del Autismo. Así como alentar la inclusividad, el apoyo, y el involucramiento de los individuos y las familias de individuos con Autismo a la comunidad. Este evento de la comunidad es para todos; incluya actividades sensoriales para todas las edades.

Este es Un Viaje Interactivo e Educativo. El Evento del Viaje Con El Autismo Unidos Mejor, sera desde las 9:00 a.m. a las 2:00 p.m. y la Caminata Ceremonial empezara a las 12:30 del medio día.

Este evento es organizado por The-Tri-Cities Autism Coalition, una organización local creada por padres, profesionistas, y organizaciones no lucrativas. Nuestros directivos incluyen representantes de el Arc of Tri-Cities, Spectrum Studios, United Family Center, The Kennewick School District (El Distrito Escolar de Kennewick), Columbia Industries, Caravel Autism Health, y Apollo Mechanical Contractors.

Escanea aquí para más información y para unirse



Our Website

CJMS ELECTIVES PRESENT

SPRINGFEST

Wednesday, April 24th
5:00 - 7:00 PM

Food Trucks, Electives
Displays and Presentations,
Games, Book Fair, Face
Painting, and More!



6TH ANNUAL

HANFORD MUSIC BENEFIT AUCTION

FRIDAY, APRIL 19TH

THE SUGAR PINE BARN

40504 DEMOSS ROAD
BENTON CITY

DOORS OPEN AT
5:30 P.M.

RECEPTION & MUSIC
SILENT AUCTION
LIVE AUCTION

HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES &
DESSERTS

BEVERAGES

Tickets are available at:
hanfordmusic.org



1 in 3 Tri-Cities students are chronically absent. Why are our schools doing WORSE THAN MANY?



BOB BRAWDY BBRAWDY@TRICITYHERALD.COM

Congestion in a main hallway as students change classrooms at Chiawana High School in Pasco.

BY ERIC ROSANE

EROSANE@TRICITYHERALD.COM

Kennewick, WA

Tri-City school districts are struggling to get students to attend class on a regular basis, and it could have lasting consequences for both the schools and the students.

Nearly 16,000 Tri-Cities students were chronically absent from school during the 2022-23 school year. That's a population larger than many of the region's mid-sized school districts.

The figure makes up nearly one in every three students enrolled in class in the Kennewick, Pasco and Richland school districts.

[The data was published this year](#) by the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and provides the first clear picture of student attendance since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted in-person learning and regular attendance practices.

Research shows regular attendance is a crucial factor in student achievement.

[The National Center for Education Statistics](#) shows students who attend regularly have been shown to achieve at higher levels than students who do not. Simply put, days spent away from class mean less learning opportunities.

In high school, attendance is a key indicator of how likely a student is to graduate.

It's especially important for kindergarten students, who build a knowledge base of skills they'll use to learn for years to come.

The chronic absenteeism rate in the Tri-Cities is more than 2.5-times higher than it was when compared with 2018-19, the last full school year with reliable data prior to the pandemic.

And chronic absenteeism rates in the Tri-Cities remain higher than state and national averages.

Here's a breakdown of last year's data, showing how many students in each school district weren't in regular attendance:

- Pasco School District: 36%, or nearly 6,700 students
- Kennewick School District: 30%, or nearly 5,700 students
- Richland School District: 25%, or about 3,500 students

WHY STUDENTS MISS SCHOOL

While many school districts — including Richland — saw year-over-year increases in attendance last year, rates haven't begun to recover in Kennewick and Pasco. It's unclear why.

Specialists working with students say there's no one dominant reason why Tri-City students aren't attending class as regularly as they used to, but systemic hurdles made worse because of the pandemic — including, for example, rising mental health issues and transportation challenges — remain a major contributing factor.

"Every student and family's situation is so unique to them," said Amber Gonzalez, associate director of Communities in Schools Benton-Franklin.

Her organization has 31 full-time student support coordinators working in 33 schools around Prosser, Kennewick, Richland, Pasco and Finley.

Those workers address attendance and behavioral challenges for schools and individual students using an evidence-based model that's tailor made for each scenario.

Gonzalez said students are struggling with behavioral norms and regular attendance routines. Anxieties with grades, social interactions with peers and teachers, and sickness are also influencing students to ditch school more often.

The rising cost of living and struggles caused by unstable housing also are affecting students, Gonzalez said.

"We've had some older students who have been helping with bills, have been getting jobs and helping their families with child care," she said.

Washington students are considered chronically absent when they miss 10% — about 18 days — or more of the 180-day school year.

Regular attendance is defined by OSPI as having, on average, less than two absences per month, regardless of if they were excused or unexcused. And an absence is defined as missing at least half the school day.

Truancy is a narrower definition of absenteeism. It specifically measures days when students missed schools and recorded an unexcused absence.

OSPI's data includes all students enrolled for at least 90 days throughout the school year.

Schools across the U.S. have been grappling with record-low attendance.

More than a quarter of the 49 million U.S. public school students missed 18 or more school days during the 2021-22 school year, making them chronically absent, [according to The Associated Press](#). That number was at just 15% prior to the pandemic.

Absenteeism and truancy rates have historically been highest among students who are homeless, come from low-income families or who are in the foster care system.

HOW TRI-CITY SCHOOLS ARE HELPING

OSPI and school districts across Washington are mounting a full-court press to re-engage students after the COVID pandemic.

Tri-City school districts have said recently that addressing the rise in absenteeism rates is among their top priorities.

“Studies indicate that the pandemic has profoundly impacted the health and well-being of our students,” Pasco Superintendent Michelle Whitney said in a statement.

“Changes in learning environments, health concerns and various disruptions have contributed to a rise in absenteeism. We acknowledge that absenteeism can impact academic progress, social connections and overall student success,” she continued.

Pasco, which has the highest rate of irregular attendance in the Tri-Cities, is addressing the issue through a “multi-faceted approach” that includes creating supportive environments, supporting mental health resources including tele-therapy sessions, offering flexible learning options, increasing engagement with parents and keeping a closer eye on attendance.

School districts, including Richland and Kennewick, share many of the same early-intervention strategies used to catch students before their attendance gets worse, including notifying parents when their student has an unexcused absence.

Teachers, school counselors and building administrators also regularly work with students and families to address barriers and root causes of bad attendance.

“The key to breaking the pattern of chronic absenteeism is working closely with the student’s family,” said Shawna Dinh, Richland School District’s public information officer.

For the past few years, OSPI has been funding regional teams to support student attendance and engagement with pandemic funds called the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER).

The teams scour attendance rates, grades and other data points to identify students who may be struggling, and then meet with them to find ways to resolve whatever challenges they may be facing to attend regularly.

“The project has been pretty successful so far,” Katy Payne, OSPI executive director of communications, said in a statement.

[A bill introduced this past legislative session](#) would have continued funding for the program, but it failed to pass or receive any money in the state’s supplemental budget. States and school districts have until the end of September to spend the rest of their ESSER money.

“We are likely to make another request next year, but in the meantime we are continuing to provide professional development and technical assistance to districts across the state to learn how to build these early warning data systems and support their students and families to stay engaged in school,” Payne said.

Malorie Kahl’s position is one that’s funded under OSPI’s attendance and re-engagement project.

She works as a regional engagement and attendance coordinator with Educational Service District 123, serving in-school specialists and counselors in Southeast Washington school districts from Prosser to Clarkston.

Although her program is ending, Kahl said she’s optimistic that school districts and communities will rise to the occasion to reduce student absenteeism in the coming years.

“We’re in the first full year back without any restrictions. There’s a lot we can learn about this year,” she said. “Just figuring out what motivates students, learning about how we can be engaging is something that I believe all schools are grappling with a little bit.”

Kahl said one motivator that keeps students across all demographics in school is a simple one: Positive interactions with adults and their peers.

CHANGES IN ADDRESSING TRUANCY

K-12 education is the “paramount duty” of the state, according to the Washington Constitution, and children have a guaranteed right to public education. With few exceptions, children between 8 and 17 are legally required to attend school.

Several days of unexcused absences can lead to serious legal proceedings, [according to the Washington ACLU](#).

Schools can file truancy petitions against parents if their student have seven days of unexcused absences in a month or 15 unexcused absences in a year.

If a court finds the parent violated rights guaranteed to the student under the state's Becca Bill, they can be fined up to \$25 for each day the student is absent without an excuse.

But piling absences rarely lead to that. In most cases, after seven unexcused absences, parents and teachers schedule a conference to identify the reason for the student's low attendance and establish a plan.

Schools offer academic help, credit retrieval opportunities, bilingual instruction, counseling, family therapy or 504 plans to help students get back on track.

If a student continues to miss classes, Tri-City schools then reach out to the [Benton-Franklin Juvenile Justice Center](#) to send a truancy officer out to conduct a home visit.

Escalating truancy can result in a petition and a subsequent hearing between the Community Engagement Board, parent and student. During these hearings, families are given information about attendance laws and discuss their reasons for non-attendance and the team works to help the youth and family develop an education success plan.

Since 2016, state laws and approaches toward truancy have shifted from a primarily punitive model to a support-driven model. That includes [changes to state law that went into affect in 2021](#) striking a juvenile detention requirement for students who miss classes.

As a result of the shift, and because of the pandemic, Tri-City schools have been filing fewer and fewer truancy petitions to bring families in front of juvenile court. Figures provided by Benton-Franklin Juvenile Court Administrator David Wheeler support that.

During the 2018-19 school year, a total 713 petitions were filed with the Juvenile Justice Center.

In 2020-21, during the height of COVID, that number dipped down to a record low 41.

With less than three months left in this school year, only 103 petitions have been filed.

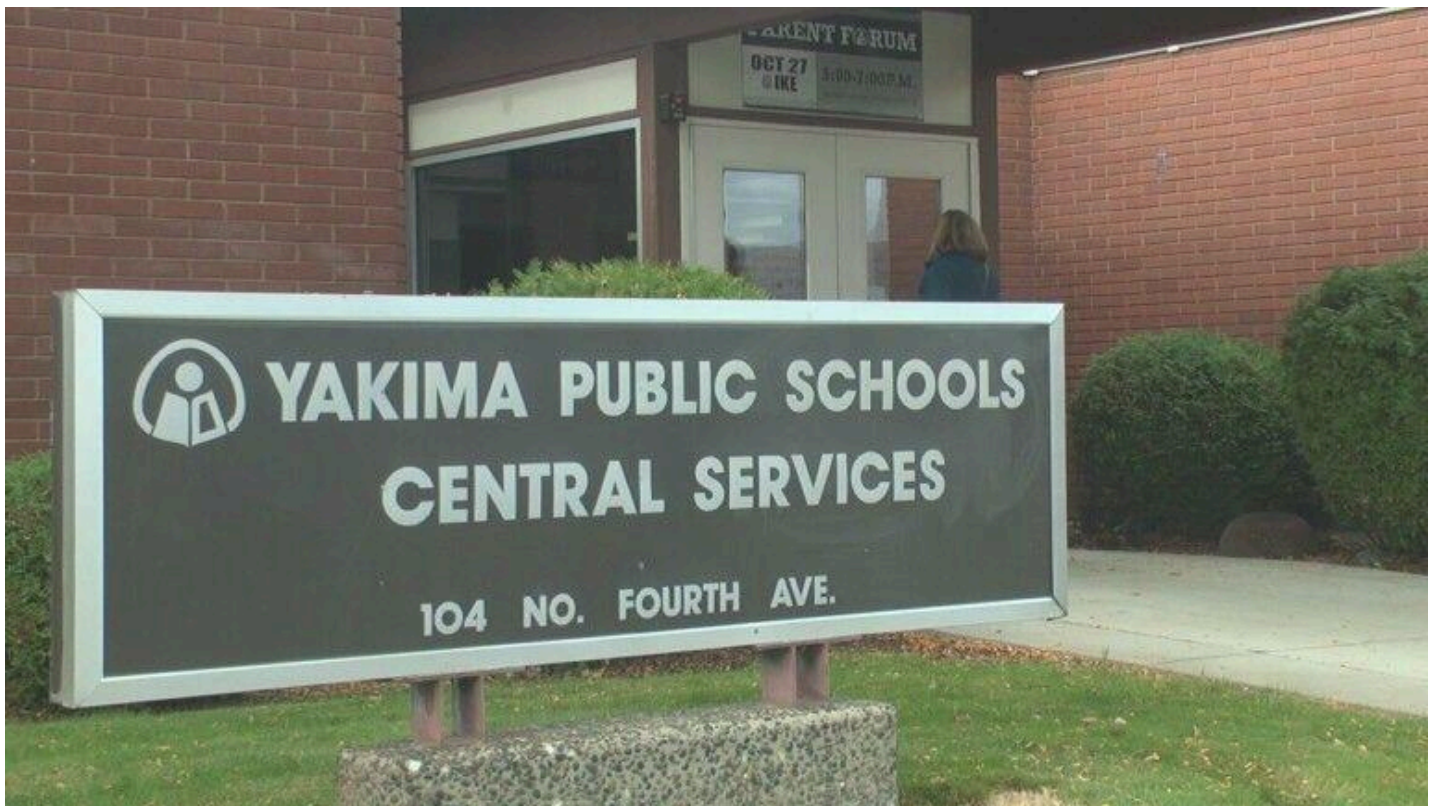
Eric Rosane: @rosanereports

https://www.applevalleynewsnow.com/news/yakima-school-district-to-host-wiaa-state-track-field-championships-for-next-4-years/article_ccd390a6-f385-11ee-a81b-6fd70eab904b.html

Yakima School District to host WIAA state track & field championships for next 4 years

Morgan Huff

Apr 5, 2024



Yakima School District

YAKIMA, Wash. -- The Yakima School District announced it is hosting the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association 1B, 2B, and 1A State Track & Field Championships for the next four years.

YSD said the Yakima Valley has a legacy of hosting state track and field events and it's become a tradition in the community.

The approval of the levy in February allows the school district to have access to resources to maintain high standards that are required for hosting approval.

However, the levy did not directly fund the approval process, it still plays a crucial role in supporting the district's ability to provide services to make the event possible.

YSD said without the support from the Yakima community, none of this would've been possible.

"We are thrilled to announce the expansion of the WIAA State Track & Field Championships, which will be hosted at Zaepfel Stadium and Don Holder Track in Yakima for the next four years," said Dr. Trevor Greene, Superintendent of Yakima School District. This event not only showcases the athletic talents of students across the state but also highlights the strong sense of community and support in Yakima. We are grateful to our voters for making this possible."

For more information on the athletics program at YSD, [click here](#).

MORE ON APPLEVALLEYNEWSNOW.COM



Explore Local Heritage: Ride With a Ranger Along Columbia River on April 13
Tobi Solvang, Morgan Huff



History Happy Hour by Library & Winery starts April 10
Tobi Solvang, Morgan Huff



City of Pasco's 8th annual Taco Crawl is around the corner
Morgan Huff

https://www.applevalleynewsnow.com/news/investigators-claim-former-toppenish-superintendent-cost-the-district-over-1-9-million/article_530d6b64-f5fd-11ee-a4a7-030eb97998ea.html

Investigators claim former Toppenish superintendent cost the district over \$1.9 million

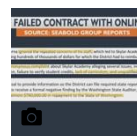
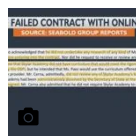
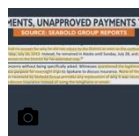
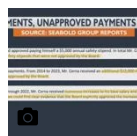
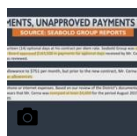
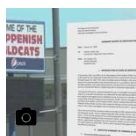
By Emily Goodell
Apr 8, 2024

LEGAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH CERNA'S ACTIONS AS SUPERINTENDENT

SOURCE: SEABOLD GROUP REPORTS

▶ MORE THAN \$939,000 IN LEGAL COSTS, INCLUDING:

- ▶ \$400,000 SETTLEMENT
- ▶ \$200,000 SETTLEMENT
- ▶ \$39,284 BACK PAY/DAMAGES
- ▶ \$300,000 SETTLEMENT



TOPPENISH, Wash. — The Toppenish School District has published three reports by outside investigators detailing financial, ethical, and legal concerns about the behavior of former Superintendent John Cerna — who was fired by the district — including that Cerna received over \$200,000 in payments that were never approved by the school board.

However, the reports by Seabold Group shed light on greater costs to the district stemming from actions taken by Cerna when he was superintendent, including nearly a million dollars in lawsuit and grievance settlements and a \$780,000 deduction in state funding after a contract Cerna negotiated with an unaccredited online school went south.

Each of those numbers, added altogether, adds up to more than \$1.9 million that investigators believe Cerna cost the district.



Report #1: Overpayments and payments unauthorized by the school board received by Cerna

 **Report #1 from Seabold Group investigation into former Toppenish School District superintendent.**

According to one report, Cerna personally received:

- \$163,500 in unapproved “optional day” payments
- \$11,811 in overpaid car allowances
- \$4,600 in overpaid cell phone stipends
- \$23,600 in unapproved safety stipends
- \$12,000 dollars in unapproved payments to compensate for health insurance increases

Additionally, the report details thousands of dollars more in pay raises he received without board oversight and reportedly unnecessary in-state and out-of-state trips for contract negotiations and vendor meetings with individuals he had personal relationships with.

Overpayments & payments unauthorized by the school board

1 of 3

OVERPAYMENTS, UNAPPROVED PAYMENTS TO C

SOURCE: SEABOLD GROUP REPORTS

claim up to fourteen (14) optional days at his contract per diem rate. Seabold Group was unable to verify that the Board approved \$163,500 in payments for optional days received by Mr. Cerna during period that was reviewed.

Cerna's car allowance to \$751 per month, but prior to the new contract, Mr. Cerna was overpaid \$11,811 in car allowances.

Cerna's cell phone or internet expenses. Based on our review of the District's documentation described above, it appears that Mr. Cerna was overpaid at least \$4,600 for the period August 2015 through February 2020.

Report #2: Loss of state funding due to failed contract negotiated by Cerna

Report #2 from Seabold Group investigation into former Toppenish School District superintendent.

According to a second report published by Seabold Group, Cerna cost the district even more money through his actions as superintendent, specifically through his negotiations to contract with a company to provide online learning for the district.

In the report, investigators said Cerna hired Skylar Academy without doing any research and solely based on his relationship with its president. Cerna reportedly ignored concerns from staff about missing invoices and complaints about lack of curriculum and unqualified instructors.

Investigators said that problem later led the district to later sue Skylar Academy for breach of contract and the state to withhold \$780,000 in funding from the district.

Costs of failed contract with online school

1 of 2

COSTS OF FAILED CONTRACT WITH ONLINE SCHOOL

SOURCE: SEABOLD GROUP REPORTS

Mr. Cerna also acknowledged that he did not undertake any research of any kind of Ms. Paez or Skylar Academy before entering into the contract. Nor did he request to receive or review any insurance.

Mr. Cerna knew that Skylar Academy did not have curriculum that would meet the rigorous standard established by the OSPI, but he intended that Ms. Paez would use the curriculum offered by another District online provider. Mr. Cerna, admittedly, did not review any of Skylar Academy's business records and Skylar Academy had been administratively dissolved by the Secretary of State at the time the 2019 contract was signed. Mr. Cerna also admitted that he did not require Skylar Academy to comply with

Report #3: Cerna's termination of employees sparks lawsuits & grievances, resulting in \$939,000 in settlements

Report #3 from Seabold Group investigation into former Toppenish School District superintendent.

A third report published by Seabold Group investigators shows the cost was even higher to the district when adding in the amount of settlement money they paid out for lawsuits and grievances involving Cerna.

Several former employees fired by Cerna in lawsuits or grievances claimed wrongful termination during his tenure; all of the cases were settled and the employees were reinstated. The district was also sued over inappropriate conduct with a student by Cerna's son and daughter-in-law and over Cerna's handling of the case.

Those cases combined racked up a combined bill of more than \$939,000, not including the district's extensive legal fees.

Legal costs associated with Cerna's actions as superintendent #1

1 of 3

< >

LEGAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH CERNA'S ACTIONS AS SUPERINTE

SOURCE: SEABOLD GROUP REPORTS

- ▶ **\$400,000 SETTLEMENT IN 2014 WRONGFUL TERMINATION LAWSUIT**
- ▶ **\$200,000 SETTLEMENT IN 2022 RETALIATION LAWS**
- ▶ **\$39,284 IN BACK PAY & DAMAGES IN 2019 GRIEVA**

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TOP VIDEOS



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Richland student at Cal Poly dies on climbing trip

**Kenneth Taylor was found dead at the base
of the Salmon Creek waterfall in Big Sur**



JOE TARICA • JTARICA@THETRIBUNEWS.COM

The Salmon Creek Trail to the falls off Highway 1 is a popular hiking spot on the Big Sur coast.

BY THE TRIBUNE NEWS AND TRI-CITY HERALD STAFF

A student from Richland, Wash., studying at California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo, died during a climbing trip over the weekend.

Kenneth Taylor, 21, was found dead at the base of the Salmon Creek waterfall in Big Sur, said the Monterey County Sheriff's Office.

Taylor, who was studying mechanical engineering, was set to graduate in 2025.

He had worked as an intern for [Bechtel in Richland](#) the summer of 2022, developing a template for pressure safety valve fluid calculations, according to his LinkedIn profile. Bechtel National holds the contract to build and commission the Hanford nuclear site's massive vitrification plant.

At Cal Poly he had worked as a part-time research assistant since January 2022 on a project to develop and test a water harvester.



INSTAGRAM •

Cal Poly student Kenneth Taylor, left, was found dead at the base of the Salmon Creek waterfall on April 6, 2024. Friend Kenneth Bevens, right, posted a tribute to Taylor on Instagram.

Cal Poly President Jeffrey Armstrong called Taylor “an outdoor enthusiast.”

“He was a founding member of the Alpine Club, participated in activities with the Surfrider Foundation and served as a trip leader for [ASI Poly Escapes](#),” a group that provides student-guided outdoor trips, Armstrong said in an email to students and their families.

Taylor's LinkedIn profile said he also had been on the Cal Poly Formula SAE Team for a student design competition to develop a prototype autocross racer.

Staff of Cal Poly Associated Students described Taylor as “a person of incredible technical skill and even more incredible kindness, unmatched wittiness and a passion for adventure that could inspire anyone,” Armstrong said.

Armstrong said the university is in touch with Taylor's family and is “extending its full support to them and his friends.”

“Our thoughts are with them as they grieve their loss,” Armstrong wrote. “It is never easy to share news like this, and we know that processing this loss can be difficult for members of our community.”

Friends mourn death of Cal Poly student

His friend Kenneth Bevens [posted on Instagram](#) that he asked Taylor to go on a hike that day, but Taylor already had plans to go to Big Sur.

“Nothing could keep that man away from the mountains!” Bevens posted.

Taylor had planned to be at an event for the Van Life Club in Cayucos, Calif., that night to celebrate the outdoor community.

“He would have loved it!” Bevens said. “The hammocks, the photos, the music, the oceanview, and all the love. When I was taking photos, I could practically feel his beaming energy and positivity!”



DAVID MIDDLECAMP • DMIDDLECAMP@THETRIBUNENEWS.COM

A large sign marks the Grand Avenue entrance to Cal Poly's university campus in San Luis Obispo.

The two were known as “Kenneth squared” and often got confused with each other since they were both outdoorsy photographers, his post said.

“I loved talking to him and hearing his laugh. He was so incredibly kind, enthusiastic, smart and gave 110% of himself to everything he did and everyone he met,” Bevens said. “Kenneth felt tremendously loved and helped others feel the same.”

Other friends followed Bevens’ post with tributes to Taylor of their own.

“Ugh it still hurts my heart. That man was a true legend and inspiration,” wrote Isaiah Traub, who goes by the user name [hiker_hawk](#) on Instagram.

In his comment, Dillon Behling called Taylor “a true light in our community. Our hearts are heavy and miss him dearly. ... His enthusiasm and kindness will continue to ripple throughout our beloved community. Much love to all who know him and to his family.”

Richland, Kamiakin baseball teams atop Mid-Columbia standings. A showdown is coming

DREAMSTIME • TNS

On Tuesday, April 9, Kamiakin visits Kennewick in a single game at Roy Johnson Field. First pitch is at 5 p.m.

**BY JEFF MORROW
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD**

Keep the date of April 26 open. That's when Kamiakin's baseball team visits Richland for a big Mid-Columbia Conference doubleheader that begins at 4 p.m.

As of April 4, those two teams are ranked No. 1 (Richland) and No. 2 (Kamiakin) in the first WIAA state RPI rankings for Class 4A.

Richland is 12-0 and Kamiakin stands at 10-0. On Tuesday, April 9, Kamiakin visits Kennewick in a single game at Roy Johnson Field. First pitch is at 5 p.m.

Latest Mid-Columbia Conference standings through April 6:

1. Richland 8-0 MCC, 12-0 overall
2. Kamiakin 6-0, 10-0
3. Kennewick 6-2, 11-2
4. Hanford 4-2, 7-4
5. Walla Walla 4-4, 7-4
5. Chiawana 4-4, 6-7
7. Southridge 0-6, 2-8
7. Hermiston 0-6, 1-7
9. Pasco 0-8, 0-12

April 5: Chiawana 10, Walla Walla 0; Chiawana 10, Walla Walla 9; Kennewick 9, Southridge 0; Kennewick 4, Southridge 1; Richland 14, Hermiston 2; Richland 5, Hermiston 0.

April 6: Hanford 23, Pasco 2; Hanford 29, Pasco 4.

April 9: Chiawana at Hanford, 5 p.m.; Kamiakin at Kennewick, 5 p.m.; Pasco at Hermiston, 5 p.m.; Southridge at Walla Walla, 4 p.m.

April 12: Hanford at Southridge (2), 4 p.m.; Hermiston at Chiawana (2), 4 p.m.; Richland at Pasco (2), 4 p.m.; Walla Walla at Kamiakin (2), 2 p.m.

NWAC baseball

It's never easy to run away with an NWAC East baseball title. This year it looks to be the same story.

One game separates five teams atop the region as of today.

But there are plenty of conference games left, as everyone plays 28 games and we're only at 8 each.

Columbia Basin manager Stefan McGovern has another strong team this season, with the Hawks off to a 22-8 start.

Already one of his pitchers — freshman left-hander Jake Robinson, from Boise — has committed to Washington State University.

Robinson is among the NWAC leaders in strikeouts this season with 59. In just 40 innings of work, Robinson's strikeouts per 9 innings of work average out to 13.2.

Robinson has a 4-0 record, while reliever Simon Lemke (Bend, Ore.) is 5-0 and has 4 saves, which is among the best in the NWAC.

Jack Fenton (Lynnwood-Kamiak) has 33 strikeouts, while Joe Pitts (Central Valley) leads the team in earned run average of 1.66. Robinson is next at 2.02.

Offensively, Brayden Mayencourt (British Columbia) leads the team with a .313 batting average.

Trevor Dale (Salt Lake City) and Wyatt Lizama (Hawaii) each had two home runs, while Dale and Hayden Mattray (Snohomish-Glacier Peak) each have 21 RBIs.

Mattray leads the Hawks with 9 stolen bases, while Lizama has 7.

NWAC East baseball standings, through April 7:

Wenatchee Valley 6-2 NWAC East, 22-8 overall

Spokane 6-2, 15-10

Columbia Basin 5-3, 22-8

Blue Mountain 5-3, 12-14

Treasure Valley 5-3, 10-20

Yakima Valley 4-4, 9-20

Big Bend 1-7, 9-17

Walla Walla 0-8, 3-14

April 6 scores: Blue Mountain 7, Big Bend 2; Blue Mountain 6, Big Bend 5 (10); Spokane 22, Walla Walla 4; Spokane 12, Walla Walla 6; Wenatchee Valley 8, Yakima Valley 3; Wenatchee Valley 6, Yakima Valley 4.

April 7 scores: Columbia Basin 6, Treasure Valley 2; Treasure Valley 5, Columbia Basin 4.

April 10 games: Big Bend at Wenatchee Valley (2), 1 p.m.; Spokane at Columbia Basin (2), 1 p.m.; Treasure Valley at Walla Walla (2), 1 p.m.; Yakima Valley at Blue Mountain (2), 1 p.m.

April 13 games: Blue Mountain at Yakima Valley (2), 1 p.m.; Columbia Basin at Spokane (2), 1 p.m.; Walla Walla at Treasure Valley (2), 11 a.m.; Wenatchee Valley at Big Bend (2), 1 p.m.

NWAC softball

Alexis Blankenship (Puyallup) was 2-for-3 with a double, home run and 3 RBIs, and Lauryn Krick (Puyallup) was 2-for-3 with a double and 4 RBIs as Columbia Basin College won its first East Region softball game 11-3 on March 30 against visiting Walla Walla.

The Hawks are 3-10 in East Region play, and 13-14 overall. But Hawks head coach Montessa Califano's team still has some time to move up the standings.

Lauren Krick (Puyallup) has been a two-way star for the Hawks this season.

Offensively, she leads the team with a .524 batting average, and her 40 RBIs is tops on the Hawks.

Krick is also the team's top pitcher, with an 8-5 record, 92 strikeouts, and a 5.87 earned run average.

Raquel Palmeira (Hawaii) has a .479 batting average, with 10 stolen bases.

Stephanie Bryson (Caldwell, Idaho) is hitting .447, with 6 home runs and 35 RBIs.

Blankenship leads the team with 19 stolen bases.

NWAC East Region softball standings through April 7:

North Idaho 11-0 NWAC East, 19-2 overall

Wenatchee Valley 10-4, 16-8

Treasure Valley 10-4, 16-10

Spokane 9-5, 14-6

Yakima Valley 3-9, 7-15

Blue Mountain 3-9, 7-19

Columbia Basin 3-10, 13-14

Walla Walla 2-10, 9-13

April 5 scores: North Idaho 10, Wenatchee Valley 1; North Idaho 16, Wenatchee Valley 5 (5); Spokane 9, Yakima Valley 5; Spokane 8, Yakima Valley 7.

April 6 scores: Blue Mountain 20, Columbia Basin 15; Columbia Basin 14, Blue Mountain 3 (5); Spokane 13, Wenatchee Valley 12; Treasure Valley 15, Walla Walla 7 (5); Treasure Valley 16, Walla Walla 14; Wenatchee Valley 9, Spokane 7; Yakima Valley at North Idaho (2), ppd.

April 7 scores: Treasure Valley 8, Columbia Basin 6; Treasure Valley 12, Columbia Basin 12.

April 9 games: Blue Mountain at Walla Walla (2), 2 p.m.

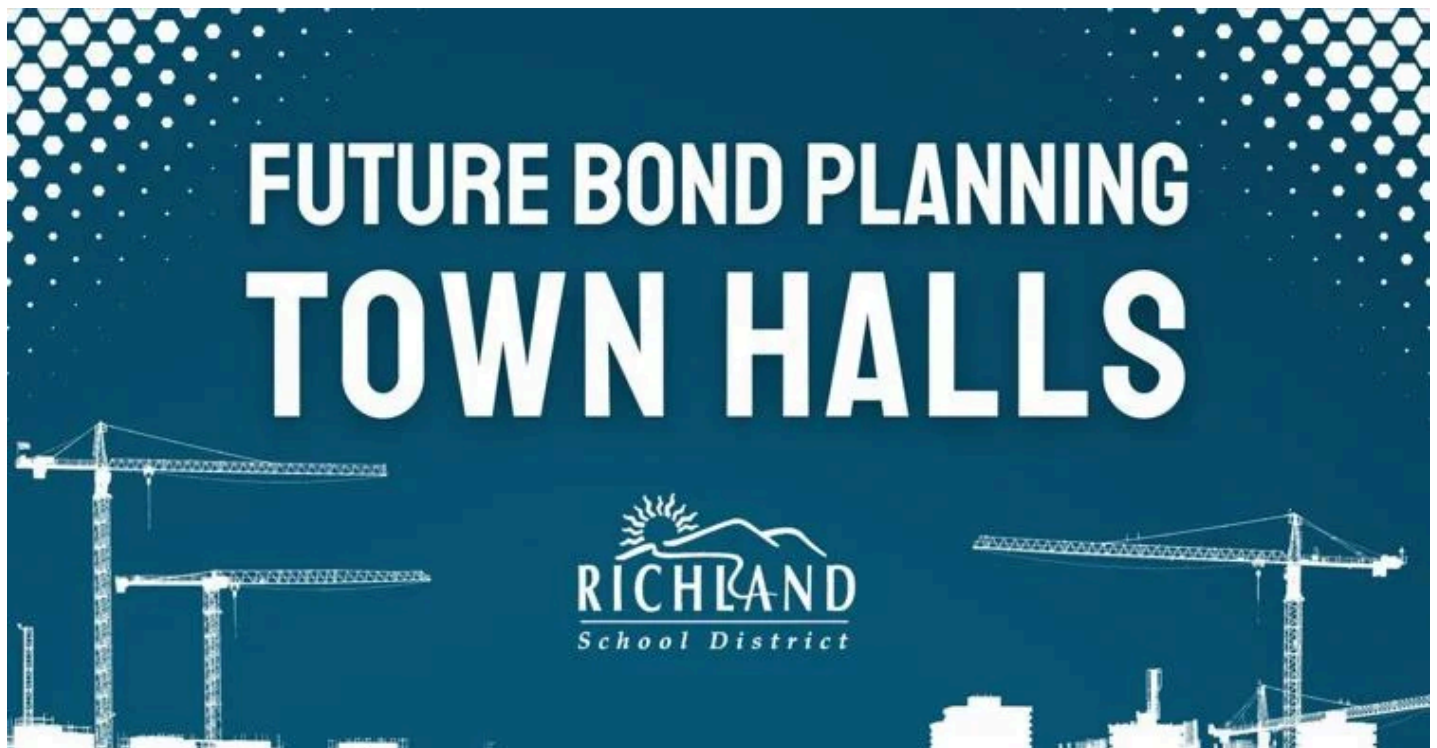
April 13 games: Blue Mountain at Wenatchee Valley (2), 12 p.m.; Spokane at North Idaho (2), 12 p.m.; Yakima Valley at Columbia Basin (2), 12 p.m.

Jeff Morrow is former sports editor for the Tri-City Herald.

https://www.nbcrightnow.com/news/richland-school-board-invites-community-to-future-bond-planning-town-halls/article_6ffeb4ac-f7b6-11ee-bdbd-4f460c7e2453.html

Richland School Board invites community to future bond planning town halls

Thomas Metcalf, NonStop Local Digital Journalist
Apr 10, 2024



Shawna Dinh

RICHLAND, Wash. - The Richland community is invited to three separate town hall meetings which will discuss the future of the [Richland School District](#) as part of the district's future bond planning.

The meetings will allow for families, students and staff to discuss multiple topics with the Richland School Board of Directors including the potential addition of a third high school, bond package priorities, budgeting and tax impacts from bond plans.

The town halls are at 6:30 p.m. each night from April 16 through 18. The first meeting is at Leona Libby Middle School on April 16, the second at Hanford High School on April 17 and the third at Richland High School on April 18.

RSD says community participation is crucial in shaping the infrastructure growth of the district.
MORE INFORMATION



Business Spotlight: Blu

West Richland, RSD awarded grant for school zone pedestrian safety project
Cal Poly student from Richland dies during trip to Big Sur