



Board of Directors, Regular Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, April 8, 2025
RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400
BENTON COUNTY, RICHLAND, WASHINGTON

The Board of Directors of Richland School District No. 400 met for a regular meeting Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 5:00 P.M. via Zoom and in person, 6972 Keene Road, West Richland, Washington. School Board President Katrina Waters presided. Board members participating: Jill Oldson, Bonnie Mitchell, and Rick Jansons. Administrators present: Superintendent Dr. Shelley Redinger, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education Dr. Bryan Jones, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education Tory Christensen, Executive Director of Operations Richard Krasner, Chief Financial Officer Travis Belisle, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Jennifer Klauss, Executive Director of State and Federal Programs Derek O'Konek, Executive Director of Behavioral Health Robert Sorensen, Executive Director of Special Education Pre-K-12 Zac Carpenter, and Director of Information Technology Glenn Whitcomb.

The Board meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Personnel)

The Board adjourned to executive session at 5:00 P.M. to discuss qualifications of an applicant for employment or review of performance of an employee (final actions must be taken in public and discussions affecting employees generally must be held in public) 42.30.110 (1) (g). The executive session was projected to last ninety minutes, with no action expected. Executive session ended at 6:27 P.M.

The Board returned to the regular meeting at 6:33 P.M.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Pledge of Allegiance

1.2 Roll Call-Chelsie Beck was excused.

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 RECOGNITIONS-School Retirees' Association of Benton/Franklin

Victoria Russell, upcoming President, introduced several association members and shared Retirees volunteer in schools, work as substitute teachers, offer grants for teachers, scholarships for students, and more. The Board thanked all for their continued support.

2.2 Student Advisory Report

Mayumi Evangelista, Hanford High School, reported on topics at the recent Student Advisory meeting including a speaker from the Tri-Cities Immigration Coalition and discussion regarding Social Emotional Learning.

2.3 Requests and Comments by Visitors (2 minutes per individual)

Erica Bostrom, Parent/Richland, spoke in support of advanced classes in schools. She stated the Quest program will grow and urged the Board to keep advanced classes in all middle schools.

Eric Bostrom, Parent/Richland, stated elimination of these classes will not make the District better and feels teachers are not able to teach mixed level classes.

Tatyana Blackburn, Parent/Richland, shared concern with eliminating advanced classes and feels students thrive when surrounded by like-minded students.

Melissa Abel, Parents/Richland, spoke in support of school nurses and shared several nurse duties including establishing relationships, making referrals, and collaborating with doctors.

Tye Blackburn, Parent/Richland, shared the benefits of the Highly Capable Program (HiCap), both academically and emotionally. His child struggled to stay engaged at school before entering the Quest program.

Krista Calvin, President of the Richland Education Association (REA), spoke in support of librarians and shared a letter written by Michelle Lane, Enterprise Middle School. Ms. Calvin asked the Board to reconsider the decision to reduce the number of librarians and will look at all avenues to take action.

Danielle Harvey, Staff/Nurse, shared deep concern about reducing six school nurses next year and feels this could put students at serious risk. Ms. Harvey urged the Board to find a different path forward.

Kim Maldonado, Staff/Richland, spoke in support of librarians at the secondary level. Ms. Maldonado stated librarians curate books for all individuals, assist students to find credible sources, and support every student.

Kathy Perez, Resident/Richland, stated nurses bring a high level of expertise to deal with health care issues including medication management, diseases, and injuries.

Kim Guyette, Resident/Richland, spoke in support of librarians and shared several duties they provide including managing budgets, chrome book assistance, supervision, and testing. She doesn't feel paras have the training needed to fill these positions.

Theresea Buczek, Parent/Richland, praised the idea of extended hours for libraries but doesn't feel secondary librarians should be cut. With misinformation rampant, trained librarians are needed.

Ron Higgins, Richland, stated he supported nurses and librarians. He also shared concerns regarding transgender students.

2.4 Board/Student Representatives/Superintendent Reports

Shelley Redinger shared disappointment regarding the Legislative budget for schools. She thanked all for the effort to complete free/reduced lunch applications, since this may increase some funding options. Dr. Redinger explained Richland School District also received a much smaller amount of ESSER funds than neighboring districts. During a meeting with the Office of Superintendent of

Public Instruction (OSPI), districts that are not following State law may lose State funding. She also explained that the District still must pay insurance costs, even for staff members that decline insurance, costing \$2.5M yearly. Local Representatives are advocating for additional funding.

Student Representatives:

Tiffany Qian, Hanford High School, shared upcoming events including a drama production, bake sale, car wash, testing and Prom. She reported the Social Emotional Learning survey is ready to be sent out.

Abby Koech, Richland High School, shared a student list of mental health resources is needed on the website and several members of the track team placed highly in a national meet.

Jill Oldson participated in mock interviews at Hanford High School. Ms. Oldson thanked the local businesses who participated.

Katrina Waters stated making cuts is difficult but is needed without the budget to sustain these positions. The District is trying to keep costs in line to avoid “binding conditions” by OSPI. Other districts may have to cut athletic programs.

Rick Jansons stated his wife is a teacher and several of his grandchildren attend the Richland School District. He shared responsibility for not investigating the budget deeply enough in the past and apologized.

3.0 BUSINESS

3.1 Performance Audit Update

Dr. Redinger shared information regarding a full chemical audit being conducted by the Benton-Franklin Health District. Career and Technical Education (CTE) classrooms, art classrooms, and science classrooms are being inspected to assure a safe environment for students. The audit began in January and will conclude in June.

3.2 Middle School Highly Capable Program (HiCap) Discussion

Enid Flynn, Instructional Technology Director, provided an update on current HiCap program. The goal is to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and working together to support advanced learners. Proposed action for 2025/2026 include:

- establish advanced ELA courses at Libby Middle School for grades 6-8
- maintain advanced Math courses at Libby Middle School for grades 6-8
- maintain advanced ELA and Math courses at Enterprise, Carmichael, and Chief Joe Middle Schools
- maintain and refine advanced science and social studies courses for Enterprise, Carmichael and Chief Joe Middle Schools.
- complete a K-12 Highly Capable Program Review in collaboration with guidance from OSPI and Whitworth University

Ms. Flynn advised this review will provide a basis for next steps to assure the needs of highly capable students are met in a way that is cohesive, future-focused, and reflective of our shared vision for educational equity and excellence. Board discussion followed.

3.3 Balanced Calendar Committee and Timeline Update

Tory Christensen, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, shared an updated timeline for Balanced Calendar Committee meetings starting tomorrow with additional members. This meeting will include development of survey questions. This survey will ask students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members to share their views on creating a balanced calendar for the Richland School District starting with the 2026-2027 school year. The results of the survey will be shared at the June 10, 2025 meeting. District leadership will then collaborate with bargaining units to solidify, in contract language, the ability to adjust the 2026-2027 School Calendar.

September–November 2025

The Committee will implement communication plans for families and community members. Collaboration will continue with our transportation, facilities, and nutritional services departments on needed system adjustments. The committee will also host town hall meetings to present information and answer questions regarding the Balanced Calendar.

On January 13, 2026, the Board will be presented with a 2026-27 Balanced Calendar for final approval. The Balanced Calendar will be submitted to REA for approval on February 1, 2026. While the idea of a more evenly distributed school year is appealing to many, with potential benefits such as reduced summer learning loss and more frequent breaks, careful planning and stakeholder input will be crucial for success.

3.4 2025/2026 Budget Planning

Travis Belisle, Chief Financial Officer, explained definitions for full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment vs. head count. The State funding formula only allocates funds to school districts based on FTE. Although growth is projected in the area, the District has not seen this growth as of yet. Mr. Belisle advised the 2025/2026 enrollment projection is 13,352, which will be used for budget planning. Next month the revenue information will be presented with budget approval needed in August. Board discussion followed with a simplified version of information requested.

3.5 Policy No. 3422-Student Sports-Concussion, Head Injury and Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Mr. Christensen reported Policy 3422 is listed as an essential policy by the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA). Notable changes include adding "Sudden Cardiac Arrest" to the title and to the body of the policy and to align with WSSDA's model policy.

It was moved by Jill Oldson and seconded by Rick Jansons –

THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE POLICY NO. 3422-STUDENT SPORTS-CONCUSSION, HEAD INJURY AND SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST WITH REQUESTED CHANGES.

Advisory Vote-Student Representatives: Koech, yes; Qian, yes
Vote: Waters, yes; Mitchell, yes; Oldson, yes; Jansons, yes
Motion was approved.

3.6 Policy No. 3416-Medication at School

Mr. Christensen stated WSSDA has classified this policy as essential. The policy is overdue for updating. Board discussion followed.

It was moved by Rick Jansons and seconded by Bonnie Mitchell –

THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE POLICY NO. 3416-MEDICATION AT SCHOOL WITH REQUESTED EDITS.

Advisory Vote-Student Representatives: Koech, yes; Qian, yes
Vote: Waters, yes; Mitchell, yes; Oldson, yes; Jansons, yes
Motion was approved.

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA (approval by a single vote of the Board)

It was moved by Rick Jansons and seconded by Jill Oldson –

THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS (4.1) THROUGH (4.6).

Advisory Vote-Student Representatives: Koech, yes; Qian, yes
Vote: Waters, yes; Mitchell, yes; Oldson, yes; Jansons, yes
Motion was approved.

4.1 Personnel Actions

CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL

RESIGNATIONS FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

Deffenbaugh, Kendra, 1.0 FTE, Language Arts, Chief Joseph Middle School, effective 3/28/25
Heinen, Kristen, 1.0 FTE, 5th Grade, White Bluffs, effective 8/31/25 (1st year leave of absence)
Panikkar, Kirstin, 1.0 FTE, Supplemental Support, Orchard, eff. 8/31/25 (1st year leave of absence)
Riley, Sheila, 1.0 FTE, 4th Grade, White Bluffs, eff. 8/31/25 (2nd year leave of absence-will sub)

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

RESIGNATIONS FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

Page, Devin, Office Professional, Leona Libby MS, eff. 8/31/2025 (from 2nd year LOA)
Tononi, Lynn, Nutrition Services Team Member, Jason Lee Elementary School, effective 4/11/25
Witwer, Alisha, Paraeducator, Leona Libby Middle School, effective 4/8/2025 (to substitute cert)

4.2 Approval of Minutes (March 25, 2025)

4.3 Policy No. 1630-Evaluation of Superintendent

4.4 Policy No. 3210-Nondiscrimination

4.5 Policy No. 6511-Staff Safety

4.6 Payroll and Warrant Information

ASB Fund Warrant Nos. 40008208 through 40008214 for \$3,281.83
Nos. 54000812 through 54000814 for \$6,490.69
Capital Projects Fund Warrant Nos. 20002342 through 20002343 for \$5,271.88
General Fund Warrant Nos. 10092002 through 10092023 for \$173,066.71
Nos. 51004797 through 51004808 for \$344,827.70
Payroll Warrant No. 10091770 through 10091770 for \$953.60
Nos. 10091890 through 10091955 for \$96,772.51
Nos. 10091984 through 10092001 for \$5,029,314.14
Electronic Fund Transfer for \$11,304,180.96
Total March Payroll approved in the amount of \$16,431,221.21

5.0 AGENDAS

5.1 Future Agenda Items

Future topics:

- Policy 2020-Course Design, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials, and Policy 2420-Grading and Progress Reports K-12
 - bring to a future agenda for discussion/consistency in boundary schools.
- Student Representatives will send a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) survey to students and share the results of the survey at the next Student Advisory meeting, as well as an upcoming Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400

SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS