Inspiring Excellence

LAKE STEVENS
School District

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SPECIAL MEETING AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 30, 2025

Board Members:
Mari Taylor, President
Nina Hanson
David Iseminger
Vildan Kirby
Paul Lund
Mary Templeton, Superintendent/Board Secretary

Student Advisory Council Officers:
Riley Boerger
Aashisri Bendalam
Yostina Mosa

The Lake Stevens School District Board of Directors met in a Special Meeting at the Educational Service Center. President Taylor called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Superintendent Templeton welcomed everyone to the 2025 Volunteer Celebration! Tonight, is all about you - our wonderful volunteers. This is a time to pause and celebrate the energy and commitment each of you gives. Your time is a precious gift.

She stated they are fortunate to have an amazing staff in our district, but volunteers are an essential part of our daily operations. Your volunteerism is critical to the success of our district. You help us to build better, stronger, healthier schools and to enhance our community. I want each of you to know how much I appreciate your time, skills, knowledge, energy and commitment to the children of Lake Stevens. Because of your generosity, the lives of our students are enriched. You are here tonight because you are the best of the best, and have been selected as your school's Volunteer of the Year. It is our pleasure to honor you.

Superintendent Templeton started by recognizing the five elected members of our community who volunteer their time to serve as School Board members:

- President Mari Taylor
- Vice President David Iseminger
- Co-Legislative Representatives Vildan Kirby and Dr. Nina Kim Hanson
- Paul Lund

And our Student Advisory Council:

- Riley Boerger
- Aashisri Bendalam
- Yostina Mosa

Thank you for your service to our district and community!

Superintendent Dr. Templeton said the first award of the evening is the Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes a community member or a community organization for outstanding support of the Lake Stevens School District. Please help me welcome Kristina Schweizer, Will Brandt and Michelle Vonderau. Kristina, Will and Michelle, thank you so much for your unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions.

Dr. Templeton said it was her pleasure to begin the presentation of their awards for the Volunteer of the Year from each school. She invited each administrator to come forward and introduce themselves and their Volunteer of the Year from their school. The following volunteers were recognized: Lake Stevens High School – Anne Julson, Cavelero Mid High School – Gwen Sarault, Lake Stevens Middle School – Joelle Martin, North Lake Middle School – Rachel Day, Glenwood Elementary – Jayme Glover, Hillcrest Elementary – Kelly Estes, Highland Elementary – Karen Nystrom, Mt. Pilchuck Elementary – Trish Davidson, Skyline Elementary – Ernie Brown, Stevens Creek Elementary – Jennifer Patterson, Sunnycrest Elementary – Sayeh Azarpay, HomeLink – Sara Ramsey, Early Learning Center – Lupita Chavez-Guillen and Linlee Young.

Superintendent Templeton said before they enjoy the hors d'oeuvres and desserts that their nutrition services staff prepared; she would like all of the Volunteers of the Year to come forward for a group picture. Then, you are all encouraged to join us in the foyer. She also thanked Kendra Hall in the Communications & Community Services Department for organizing this special event.

President Taylor adjourned the Special Meeting at 5:45 p.m.

The Lake Stevens School District Board of Directors met in a Regular Session at the Lake Stevens Educational Service Center. A Zoom option was available for this meeting that President Taylor called to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mari Taylor, Paul Lund, Vildan Kirby, Nina Hanson, David Iseminger, Dr. Mary Templeton and SACo members Riley Boerger, Aashisri Bendalam. Saco Secretary Yostina Mosa was unable to attend.

AGENDA/MINUTES

Director Iseminger made a motion to approve the April 30, 2025 Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Lund and unanimously approved. Director Lund made a motion to approve the April 16, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Director Kirby and unanimously approved.

REPORTS OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND PROGRAMS

Stevens Creek Elementary Principal Matt Pewitt presented an update on the school's Growth & Goals related to their School Improvement Plan (SIP), focusing on improving literacy achievement. CET Teams are exploring various formative assessment strategies that offer timely, specific feedback - directly to students, the primary consumers of this data - empowering them to make real-time adjustments to their learning.

Principal Pewitt introduced 5th grade teacher Heidi Finley who presented "Gamify Writing," where students respond to creative quick-write prompts connected to classroom content. This approach builds writing stamina while keeping the process fun and engaging. A video demonstration of the "We Will Write" game was shared, along with student feedback on the gamified writing experience. This strategy is used across all content areas, allowing students to copy and paste longer writing tasks and share their work in a "game show" style format for peer review.

Additionally, Ms. Finley showcased the use of Magic School, an AI-based tool that acts as a personal writing tutor for students. With teacher-customized feedback options, students receive targeted support to enhance their writing. Ms. Finley shared student examples and highlighted positive feedback regarding the tool's impact.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

President Taylor opened the floor for community comments. Hearing none, she closed this portion of the meeting.

DECISION ITEMS

Consent Agenda:

Director Iseminger made a motion to approve the "Consent Agenda" items:
Approval of the May 2, 2025 Warrant Nos. 316603 to 316818 - $1,633,844.13 manual warrants drawn on the General, Capital Projects & ASB & Transportation Vehicle Fund(s) (E:74/25) Personnel Report: Classified Employment: Shelvina Banghart, Hannah Hodgins, Germaine Sparks; Resignations: Janice Baird, Hannah Mantei; Retirements: Lisa Crannell (E:75/25); Approval of the Co-curricular Report (E:76/25); Approval of the Cavelero Bands and Choir to travel to Coeur d'Alene, ID to compete in the Music in the Parks competition May 30 – June 1, 2025 (E:77/25); Acceptance of a grant donation in the amount of $1,000.00 from Stevens Creek PTA to Stevens Creek Elementary ASB (E:78/25).
The motion was seconded by Director Lund and unanimously approved.

Director Kirby motioned to adoption of Resolution No. 9-25 Bond Delegation. The motion was seconded by Director Lund and unanimously approved by a roll call vote (R: 9-25).

Director Hanson motioned to adoption of Resolution No. 10-25 Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) Membership. The motion was seconded by Director Kirby and unanimously approved by a roll call vote (R:10-25).

Director Lund motioned to approve the Final Acceptance of the Public Works Project. The motion was seconded by Director Hanson and unanimously approved (E:79/25).

The Facilities and School Planning and Construction Departments have reviewed the work of the contractors listed below on the following public work projects for adherence to contract documents, specifications and public work requirements.

Projects

Replace expansion joint caulking in pool at Lake Stevens HS (Aquatic Specialty Services)
Repair partition wall at Glenwood ES (NWAP)

Service Calls

Service clocks at Highland ES (Dimensional Communications)
Service fire alarm system at Hillcrest ES (Pye Barker)
Service fire alarm system at Cavelero MHS (Pye Barker)

All items on the construction punch list have been completed and all the necessary paperwork to accept the projects has been received.

INFORMATION

Superintendent Dr. Mary Templeton shared that her Entry Plan is not something developed in isolation, but rather a celebration of community and a shared commitment to fulfilling the district's Strategic Plan. It also reflects the Board's thoughtful and responsible approach to the superintendent hiring process.

"As your Superintendent," Dr. Templeton said, "I spent time reflecting on this plan. What drew me to the Lake Stevens School District was its powerful vision statement - I knew I could stand behind it." The vision of Lake Stevens School District serves as the foundation for excellence: *to inspire a community-wide culture of belonging, growth, and excellence where each individual is supported and challenged, engaged and empowered, and valued for their unique contributions.*

Executive Director of Communications Jayme Taylor provided an overview of the exciting work and engagement that have taken place since Superintendent Templeton joined the district last July. She gave updates on each phase, starting with Phase One. This initial phase was all about building relationships—listening, learning, and laying the groundwork for meaningful engagement with the entire community. Dr. Templeton has been intentional in making connections that help her better understand the culture, strengths, and opportunities within Lake Stevens.

Relationship Building with Key Stakeholders

- Dr. Templeton meets individually with each of you as board members to establish positive, collaborative relationships.
  - She also spends time with Cabinet, district office staff, and school administrators—opening lines of communication, learning about their work, and understanding the day-to-day operations that keep our system running.
  - She met with local and state elected officials—helping to build strong partnerships that will benefit our students and schools long-term.

Community Engagement

- Over the summer and into the start of the school year, Dr. Templeton made a visible and consistent effort to be present at community and school events.
- She attended Ready for Kindergarten sessions, back-to-school open houses, the Lake Stevens Farmers Market, and other community gatherings to meet families, students, and community members in authentic and informal settings.
  - These have her valuable insight into what matters most to our families—and what they're excited about for the future.

During Phase II, Dr. Templeton took a deeper dive into the day-to-day experiences of our schools, staff, and community partners. This phase focused on listening and observing—with the goal of understanding how our systems, relationships, and values come to life across the district and in the broader community.

School Visits and Staff Engagement

- Dr. Templeton visited every school in the district and attended at least one staff meeting at each site.
  - These visits gave her the opportunity to observe teaching and learning in action, hear directly from school-based teams, and continue gathering input using her five guiding questions.
  - Her presence in schools allowed her to better understand what's working well, where challenges exist, and what matters most to our educators.

Labor Partner Meetings

- She met with leadership teams from all of our bargaining units to build strong, collaborative relationships.
  - These conversations helped her gain insight into employee perspectives, working conditions, and shared goals for supporting students.

Civic, Higher Ed, and Regional Engagement

- Dr. Templeton attended City Council meetings and events hosted by local civic groups to build connections beyond the school district.
- She met with leaders from Everett Community College and Washington State University to explore alignment between K–12 and higher education pathways.
- She also met with Superintendent Ismael Vivanco at ESD 189 to understand the supports and services available to our district through the regional service agency.

Community Partnerships

- She connected with a wide range of community partners—PTAs, senior citizen groups, police and fire departments, the Chamber of Commerce, faith-based leaders, scouts, and the public library.
  - These conversations helped deepen her understanding of how the community supports our students and how we can strengthen those partnerships moving forward.
- **Phases III & IV: From Insights to Action**
- After gathering input from across the district, Dr. Templeton analyzed the data and identified common themes. Using clear communication and regular updates, she's working to build a shared understanding and momentum aligned with our Foundation for Excellence, including identifying key performance indicators to track progress toward our goals.
- Dr. Templeton's work this year has been grounded in our five foundational principles. Her focus has been on building strong relationships, supporting effective teaching, and using data to guide decisions - all with the goal of ensuring every student feels seen, supported, and challenged. She's engaged with a wide range of partners, including families and caregivers, staff, local leaders, and organizations like PTAs, higher ed, and civic groups. At the same time, she's prioritized transparency - sharing updates through her "Did You Know? With Dr. T" videos, school visits, media outreach, and ongoing conversations with students and stakeholders. Her approach has been clear: listen, learn, and lead with purpose.
- Dr. Templeton's work is aligned with the five goal areas of our Foundation for Excellence and tremendous progress is already underway. She's supporting stronger academic and behavioral systems through MTSS, continuing efforts to ensure safe and inclusive environments, and focusing on growth for every student and staff member. She's also helping lead the way on innovation—making sure learning spaces and technology support real-world, future-ready skills.

- Finally, facility improvements remain a top priority, with the successful February bond helping us to address safety, growth, and modernization needs.
- It's all part of creating a system where every student can thrive - now and into the future!

Executive Director of Construction and Planning Robb Stanton provided an update on the selection of a General Contractor/Construction Manager for the Skyline and Lake Stevens Middle School Modernization and Expansion project. Per RCW 39.10 – Alternative Public Works Contracting Procedures, a competitive process was established to identify a Construction Manager/General Contractor (GC/CM) for the Skyline/Lake Stevens Middle School Modernization and Expansion Project. Five firms submitted Statements of Qualification. An eight-member panel consisting of District staff, architects, project managers and a student evaluated the qualifications and invited three contractors to participate in interviews. The panel interviewed the three contractors and invited two to submit Final Proposals.

A weighted scoring system that evaluated the interviews and final proposals identified Spee West Construction as most qualified for this project. The District will enter into negotiations with Spee West for a contract for pre-construction services, which will be submitted to the board for approval. Spee West will also serve as Construction Manager/General Contractor for the project and an amendment to the pre-construction contract will be executed once a Guaranteed Maximum Price for the project has been negotiated.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Superintendent Mary Templeton highlighted the excellent work being done at Stevens Creek around AI exploration. She noted that the WSSDA conference in October focused on introducing school boards across the state to artificial intelligence - what it is, the potential risks and benefits, and how it can support innovation in education.

Superintendent Templeton, along with Mike Weatherbie and Gina Anderson, has attended two conferences on AI. Together, they have focused on helping others understand what AI is, the tools available, and key considerations for safe and effective use.

She emphasized her strong interest in AI exploration, with one important caveat: safety and risk management. Gina Anderson and Mike Weatherbie developed a one-page guidance document for staff outlining acceptable use. Dr. Templeton highlighted the importance of understanding that AI is a tool, but human judgment must remain central. Superintendent Templeton underscored the importance of being thoughtful, careful, and safe - especially regarding the use of AI.

Superintendent Templeton stated Executive Director of Elementary Education, Steve Burleigh, and Hillcrest Principal, Katy Rudolph, are attending a national Science of Reading conference. The purpose of the conference is to align thinking with educational leaders across the country and reflect on our current practices in literacy instruction. Steve Burleigh noted that Lake Stevens is well ahead of the curve nationally.

BOARD COMMENTS

Director Hanson expressed her gratitude to the incredible volunteers and to Executive Director of Communications Jayme Taylor for her efforts with the Qmlativ communication. She also thanked Principal Pewitt and his team for their outstanding work, along with the Executive Director of Construction and Planning Robb Stanton and his team for their dedication. She concluded that both she and Director Kirby will not be seeking re-election to the school board next year.

Director Kirby expressed her appreciation to the incredible volunteers, Dr. Templeton's entry plan, and Stevens Creek for their presentations. She especially enjoyed learning about how AI is being used in the classroom, noting her enthusiasm for technology. She closed by thanking everyone for being there that evening.

Director Iseminger congratulated the Volunteers of the Year, expressing deep appreciation for all they do. He emphasized how valued they are and how much they contribute to the strength of the community. He noted how meaningful it is to recognize the time and energy they dedicate to our schools. He also thanked Stevens Creek for their interesting and compelling update and board presentation, as well as those who contributed donations. He expressed gratitude to the Superintendent for her work on the entry plan and shared his enthusiasm about the progress being made with the bond.

Director Lund expressed his admiration for the Volunteers of the Year, noting how incredible they are and acknowledging that, with so many wonderful volunteers across the district, it must have been difficult to select just one from each school. He thanked Stevens Creek and 5th grade teacher Heidi Finley for their presentation. While acknowledging the excitement around new technologies, he emphasized the importance of having clear guidelines and being cautious. He thanked Dr. Templeton, commending her courage for navigating her entry plan so publicly. He also expressed appreciation to Executive Director of Construction and Planning Robb Stanton for his report and praised Jayme Taylor for her outstanding work. He concluded by saying it was a great night and thanked the students who attended.

SACo Vice President Aashi Bendalam thanked everyone for attending and gave a special shoutout to Miss Heidi Finley 5th grade teacher from Stevens Creek for her engaging presentation. She also expressed gratitude for the generous donations and thanked Dr. Templeton for her dedication and hard work.

SACo President Riley Boerger thanked everyone for attending and wished them a good night.

President Taylor remarked that it was a great evening and thanked everyone for being there.

ADJOURNMENT

With no objections from the other directors, President Taylor adjourned the Regular Session at 8:06 p.m.

President _____ Secretary _____