

Highland School District #203
District Office
Monday, December 8, 2025
Special Board Meeting -7:30 a.m.

The **December 8, 2025, Special Board Meeting** was convened by Chair David Barnes at 7:33 a.m. Those present also included board members Lupita Flores, Kerry Jones, Carlos López, and Cindy Reed, Superintendent Mindy Schultz, Director of Business & Operations Francis Badu, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman. Board member David announced that the meeting is being recorded.

II. Business:

A. Oath of Office-Swearing In of Elected School Board Member: Elected board member Kerry Jones read his oath of office and was duly sworn in by Superintendent Mindy Schultz.

B. Communication Check-In: Marching band update: 100 replacement hats have been ordered for the band as well as half of the jackets with their accessories, and half of the drapes. These will be ready for the next marching season in the spring. Music teacher John Strahle was nominated for and selected to be inducted into the Washington Music Educators Association Hall of Fame at their induction ceremony in February at which our school choir will be performing.

G. 1st Reading of New and/or Revised Policies:

New: 3425 Accommodating Students with Adrenal Insufficiency

Revised: 1630 Evaluation of the Superintendent

Discussed the timeline and process of the superintendent evaluation. No other questions, policies will move to 2nd reading.

H. Budget Status & Staffing Update: Francis: We're starting the 2026-2027 budget projections process very early this year and are still putting numbers together to review with the board in January. Mindy-Francis: Enrollment is pretty much the same, we're down two from what we budgeted, which is better than where we were last year. We estimated very conservatively and are in a better place than districts that didn't. OSPI is trying to be very clear to districts to expect a decline in enrollment for the next 10 years. Some parents are unhappy with what the state is mandating and so taking their kids out of public school to either homeschool or enroll at a private school.

I. District Social-Emotional Behavior Data: Mindy: Shared a chart and explained how teachers and students both take surveys which are then looked at and compared for help with identifying students at risk. The screening starts at 2nd grade and at the younger ages is visual. Questions center around how teachers and students feel about things such as 'I like school', 'I don't have friends'. There is a thorough explanation with the students to be sure they understand the questions and the responses. A student's score might 'screen them in' to a small group to focus on a specific skill for that student, such as keeping hands to self or how to make friends. Poor attendance is a trigger to focus on a student. The SAEBRS (Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener) scores go hand in hand with behavior. There can be some inconsistency with how a teacher screens a student and how the student screens themselves.

HHS Principal Jeremy Gillespie joined the meeting at 7:52 a.m.

D. HSD CTE Presentation: Jeremy: For a long time the CTE Director was another job a principal did on the side. After research and networking, Jeremy found a better solution of having an ESD employee be the CTE director for multiple schools. We have committed to this model this school year and next. Jeff Cochran is our CTE Director. It has already paid over 60% of his employee costs due to the increased offerings we are able to have. As well as the traditional CTE art and shop offerings, now we have CTE health and leadership options. There are CTE dual credits, i.e. animal science, which are

college credits, but they do not transfer as easily as the *College in the High School* credits. CTE opens up graduation pathways and the plan with the new director is accomplishing what we hoped.

High School Counselor Elise Marchand joined the meeting at 7:57 a.m.

C. HHS High School & Beyond Plan: Jeremy and Elise: SchoolLinks is a platform that helps students discover their career, and/or major, learn the education path they need to reach that goal, get matched to a university(ies) and will be mandatory for all school districts next school year. Highland opted to be part of the pilot program this year. Elise opened the app for the board to see what a student sees and how they work through modules to discover their interests, the pathways to prepare for schooling and career in that field. The program starts with students in 7th grade (for now) and goes through seniors. They work on it during advisory and can change their info as interests change as they mature.

Elise left the meeting at 8:13 a.m.

E. Band Fee Discussion: Jeremy: Before Covid, the band rental fee collection model worked but after Covid it did not work very well. The \$90/year band instrument rental fee does not come close to covering the cost of annual instrument repair. The proposed new fee, \$150/year, comes closer although it still does not cover refurbishment and replacement costs. Would like this to start mid-year, this school year, so it is proposed to have 1st Semester fee be \$45 and 2nd Semester fee be \$75. Adequately notifying parents of the mid-year increase is vital. Band is not affected by the ASB 1660 rule as students receive something [tangible] in return for the fee. Must have a plan for how to roll it out and it will be voted on at the next meeting.

F. Future Capital Projects Planning: Jeremy: Had a meeting with coaches and parents about the condition of the track, resulting in a broad consensus that it needs to be fixed. Had two companies through the district co-op KCDA come out and look at the track. We were told it is most cost effective to repair the tennis courts at the same time. We have to decide what level of quality of track we want to go with. There are permeable surfaces that let water drain through and those that don't. The first option risks more rapid negative effect on the underlying concert base, the latter risks having standing water/puddles on the track. We should have some rough cost numbers by the end of the month. The plan is if we decide on a contractor the track could be ready by next fall.

Jeremy left the meeting at 8:32 a.m.

J. Open Board Position: The term of outgoing board member David ends this month. It would be best to post for a replacement now, open until January 16th. Follow-up discussion at the January board meeting.

David announced he is accepting a motion to add to the agenda.

Cindy moved to add Board Reorganization to the agenda, Kerry 2nd; motion passed.

K. Board Reorganization: After a brief discussion, Lupita will take the role of Chair, Cindy will serve as Vice Chair and Leg Rep, Kerry – WIAA Rep, and Carlos – Title IX Rep.

III. Closing Items

There were no final questions nor comments.

The December 8, 2025, Special meeting was adjourned at 8:39 a.m.

Chair

Secretary