

Yelm Community Schools, District No. 2

107 First Street North • Yelm, WA 98597 • (360) 458-1900 • www.ycs.wednet.edu

MINUTES

of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, January 8, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill Hauss, Denise Hendrickson, Ryan Jewell, Frank King, Casey Shaw

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Hannah Hiiva, Sofie Miera, Rebecca Rankin, Kailey Slevin, Cali Stein, Ayden Williams

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

DeeDee Buckingham, Lisa Cadero-Smith, Charles Cook, Jodi Jarmin, Teri Melone, Shannon Powell, Traci Schultz, Chris Woods

CALLED TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Casey Shaw called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

SOUTHWORTH ELEMENTARY SPOTLIGHT

Principal Charles Cook and Vice Principal Traci Schultz presented Southworth Elementary's 2025–26 School Improvement Plan, describing how the school is advancing learning, belonging, and community through collaborative leadership and staff engagement.

The learning focus includes improving student attendance, strengthening Tier I instruction, implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), utilizing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and increasing student engagement. Longevity data was reviewed to provide context for instructional and staffing efforts.

The belonging focus emphasizes building a culture of dignity, supporting positive student behavior, and expanding student leadership opportunities, creative outlets, and recognition.

The community focus centers on increasing shared ownership through community input, strengthening inclusive two-way communication, and deepening family partnerships in student learning.

Looking ahead, leadership priorities include developing student mentor and buddy programs, strengthening vertical teaming, teaching hope as part of student development, and continuing to create opportunities for families to engage with and support school initiatives.

YEA VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE

Board President Casey Shaw provided a statement in response to the vote of no confidence issued by YEA. He described entering service without prior bias and serving during a period marked by levy failures, financial instability, and difficult budget reductions driven by the loss of COVID funds and structural issues in Washington's school funding system. The statement emphasized that ongoing fiscal challenges required widespread cuts, including personnel, and that there is no unused pool of funds to resolve the deficit.

President Shaw expressed concern about misinformation, social media campaigns, and media narratives that have contributed to division, distrust, and hostility within the community, noting that these efforts do not reflect the views of the majority. The statement acknowledged shared

responsibility between the district and YEA for strained relationships and emphasized the need for improved transparency, communication, and collaboration moving forward.

President Shaw voiced strong support for Superintendent Woods, citing confidence in his character, leadership, and commitment to students during unprecedented challenges, and stated that the vote of no confidence further divides the community rather than rebuilding trust. The statement concluded by calling for collaboration over conflict, rebuilding trust among stakeholders, and reaffirmed the board’s unanimous support for the superintendent in the best interest of students and the community.

AUDIENCE

Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Chris Woods thanked all who have reached out with messages of support.

Community Comments

Kathryn Cullum, Tiffany Lintz, Sam Yount, Kailee Houlihan, Julie Woods, Ashley Lindsay, and Hadley Woods presented comments.

NEW BUSINESS

INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS – APPROVED

<u>NEW HIRES</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>
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No Report

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

No Report

RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS / TERMINATIONS

Ethan Clary, YHS Coach Assistant Track	Resignation 12/31/2025
Emma Johnson, YMS Coach Assistant Girls Soccer	Resignation 12/10/2025
Kristian Little, Transportation Bus Driver	Resignation 1/5/2026
Jonathan Shimabukuro, YHS Coach Assistant Baseball	Resignation 12/10/2025

STAFFING CHANGES:

No Report

REQUEST FOR WAIVERS FOR TEACHING OUT OF ENDORSEMENT:

John Oakes, YHS, Math	Long Term Sub 1/5/2026
Brandon Borchers, YHS Science	Long Term Sub 12/14/2025

M/ Bill Hauss; S/ Denise Hendrickson; Motion carried unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board members expressed appreciation to Southworth Elementary for hosting the meeting, highlighting student performances, the choir, and the school’s welcoming environment. Board members also shared positive experiences with Southworth Elementary’s programs, including the buddy system, and described the school’s strong sense of community and long-standing relationships between staff, students, and families.

Board members voiced strong support for Superintendent Chris Woods, citing his visible presence in schools and the community, his relationships with students and staff, and his transparency and accessibility. Several board members, including those involved in his hiring, expressed confidence in his leadership and commitment to supporting him through current district challenges.

Board members acknowledged the district's financial difficulties, increased polarization, and ongoing conflict, emphasizing the need for unity, respectful dialogue, transparency, and collaboration. Several board members expressed hope that the meeting marked a step toward rebuilding trust, strengthening the district, and moving forward together with a shared focus on students.

Student Representative Comments:

- Thanked Southworth students for their performance.
- Recognized Southworth administrators for using positive incentives to encourage student attendance.
- Expressed strong appreciation for Superintendent Chris Woods, highlighting his care, sincerity, and commitment to students
- Emphasized the importance of allowing all perspectives to be respectfully shared and heard.
- Noted concerns about increasing polarization and encouraged productive, respectful dialogue within the community.
- Thanked community members for participating in school board meetings and volunteering their time.
- Reflected on two years of service as a student board representative, expressing gratitude despite recent challenges.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent thanked Southworth Elementary for hosting the meeting and recognized the school's welcoming environment, strong leadership team, and dedicated staff. He highlighted the staff's commitment to meeting the needs of all students, their willingness to persist through challenges, and their innovative approach to testing new strategies to improve student outcomes.

Addressing the vote of no confidence, the Superintendent stated his commitment to listening and engaging in respectful dialogue, including inviting teachers who supported the vote to meet and share their perspectives. He emphasized that he holds no anger but acknowledged feelings of sadness while remaining hopeful and committed to continuing his work as long as the board believes he is the right person for the role.

The Superintendent reaffirmed his dedication to advocating for students during the district's financial challenges, noting the importance of unity, collaboration, and focusing on students rather than internal conflict. He shared an example of collaborative problem-solving with extracurricular and athletics leadership to explore creative ways to sustain student activities despite funding limitations.

He emphasized the need for community partnerships to support students and ensure equitable opportunities, stating that students should not be disadvantaged because of district financial conditions. The Superintendent concluded by expressing appreciation for the support shared during the meeting and reaffirmed his commitment to continue showing up, listening, and leading in service of students and the district.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 7:45 P.M.

President Casey Shaw recessed the regular meeting at 7:45 p.m. for an executive session to evaluate the performance of a public employee. As allowed by RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g). He stated the board would be in executive session until 8:15 p.m. The board will not be taking any further action following the executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION EXTENDED – 8:15 P.M.

The board extended the executive session for 55 minutes, until 9:10 p.m.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION – 9:10 P.M.

The board returned from executive session at 9:10 p.m. Board President Casey Shaw announced there would be no further action and the meeting would be adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Approved by:

/S/Chris M. Woods
Secretary to the Board

/S/Casey Shaw
Board President