

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, February 12, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill Hauss, Denise Hendrickson, Ryan Jewell, Casey Shaw

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Sofie Miera, Kailey Slevin, Ayden Williams

CALLED TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Casey Shaw called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

RIDGELINE MIDDLE SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Principal Craig Curry and Assistant Principal Anthony Quichocho presented an overview of Ridgeline Middle School's work to strengthen Learning, Belonging, and Community, highlighting progress aligned with the school's continuous improvement efforts and AVID implementation.

Learning

Administration outlined the school's commitment to strong Tier 1 instruction through consistent use of AVID WICOR strategies (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), learning walks, and regular progress monitoring. Ridgeline continues its pursuit of AVID Demonstration School status and hosted an AVID Showcase in December 2025.

AVID staff members Daryn Walter and Donna McCarthy highlighted the impact of the AVID Elective program (grades 6–8), which focuses on college and career readiness, organization, study skills, tutorials, and public speaking. Students reported higher grades, improved confidence, stronger speaking and listening skills, and increased empathy and future planning skills.

Structured Literacy staff member Julie Ruger presented on the Literacy (LAP) elective, which provides targeted, explicit instruction in decoding, fluency, and comprehension for students needing additional reading support. From Spring 2025 to Winter 2026, 72% (39 of 54) of participating students demonstrated growth on district reading assessments, reinforcing the program's positive impact on academic confidence and trajectory.

Fall-to-Winter FAST benchmark data demonstrated:

- Increased proficiency for students on IEPs, including gains in seventh-grade literacy and eighth-grade math and literacy.
- 235 students met growth targets in reading; 241 met growth targets in math.
- Continued areas of focus include sixth-grade math proficiency and increasing overall growth from Fall to Spring.

Staff emphasized ongoing cycles of inquiry, including grade and F-rate monitoring, quarterly CSIP reviews, and student and parent surveys to refine instructional practices and respond to student needs.

Belonging

Administration shared strategies to strengthen belonging through attendance supports, positive behavior systems, student recognition initiatives, and youth-led student voice efforts. Listening sessions and survey data inform responsive changes. Strategies include attendance incentives, attendance contracts with family involvement, collaboration with community partners, and observation of positive classroom practices.

Student and parent feedback reflected strong relationships and clarity of expectations, while also identifying the need to continue supporting students who feel academically behind or hesitant to seek help. Staff reiterated their commitment to a “people over programs” mindset to ensure students feel seen and supported.

Community

Community engagement efforts were presented by Becca Cole, President of the RMS Booster Club. She highlighted expanded family and community events, including Teen Nights, family engagement activities, and support for recurring school events. Emphasis was placed on providing low-barrier, accessible opportunities for families to connect, increasing parent partnerships, maintaining transparency through shared data and feedback, and building relationships with local businesses and community organizations.

Overall, the presentation reflected Ridgeline’s continued commitment to measurable academic growth, meaningful student voice, strong instructional systems, and intentional efforts to foster belonging and community partnerships.

AUDIENCE

Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Chris Woods reported on an organized student walkout at the high school that was promoted on social media for 9:40 a.m. Families were notified in advance that the district did not support or encourage the walkout and would follow standard attendance policies in accordance with state law.

Approximately 50 students participated, with some excused by parents and others leaving without permission. The school day otherwise proceeded as normal. Administrators, teachers, counselors, and security staff were visible and engaged, speaking with students individually, encouraging them to return to class, and ensuring student safety. Some students returned to class after leaving campus. Parents of students who left campus were contacted. Superintendent Woods expressed pride in the staff for handling the situation calmly and professionally, and clarified that the walkout was neither staff-led nor district-supported. Community members who contacted the district were appreciative once accurate information was provided.

Superintendent Woods also noted the ongoing influence of social media on students and emphasized the importance of partnering with families to help students navigate messaging, understand appropriate ways to express their views, and remain engaged in school.

Regarding district finances, Superintendent Woods reviewed the use of capital funds to help address current budget challenges. Approximately \$340,000 in allowable expenditures were shifted from the general fund to the capital fund to provide one-time relief. A resolution will be presented to transfer \$1.1 million in accumulated interest earnings (2015–2025) from the capital fund to the general fund. The district is facing up to a \$4 million deficit this year and a projected \$8–10 million deficit next year due to the loss of levy revenue, which accounts for approximately 15% of the district budget. These one-time measures provide temporary relief but do not eliminate the need for long-term solutions.

Superintendent Woods will continue bi-weekly communications to staff and families to provide transparent updates on the budget and binding conditions.

Lastly, the district has regained limited access to its Facebook account and will continue sharing information through social media and ParentSquare to keep families informed and highlight positive district news.

Community Comments

Comments were presented by Toni Froehling.

NEW BUSINESS

INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS – APPROVED

<u>NEW HIRES</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>
Lidia Downey	RMS Paraeducator Student Specific	1/16/2026
Cassidy Foster	YMS Coach Assistant Girls Soccer	2/2/2026
Miguel Gonzalez Oseguera	YHS Coach Head Boys Soccer	3/2/2026
Andrew Legenfelder	MK Paraeducator Student Specific	1/20/2026

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

No Report

RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS / TERMINATIONS

Gary Clinton	YHS Teacher CTE	Retirement 8/31/2026
Abril Cota Soto	MK Paraeducator Instructional	Resignation 2/20/2026
Amanda Cozar	Transportation Bus Driver	Resignation 1/12/2026
Hailey Herman	Facilities Custodian	Resignation 2/6/2026
Jolynne Hopkins	YHS Coach Head Girls Cross Country	Resignation 1/15/2026
Christopher Howard	FS OP V	Resignation 1/29/2026
Dawn Kraves	YHS Teacher CTE	Retirement 8/31/2026
Dawn Lantz	YHS Teacher CTE	Retirement 8/31/2026
Luis Pintado	MP Paraeducator SPED Self/CLC	Termination 2/12/2026
Michael Riley	YHS Teacher SPED STEP Program	Retirement 8/31/2026

STAFFING CHANGES:

No Report

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

RESOLUTION 03-25-26 – TRANSFER OF CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND INTEREST EARNED TO GENERAL FUND - APPROVED

M/Ryan Jewell; S/Bill Hauss; Motion carried unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board members thanked RMS for hosting and commended the comprehensive presentation, noting it was encouraging to hear positive information and see the strong work happening in schools. The RMS band and student presenters were praised for their performances and confidence.

Several members addressed the recent student walkout. One member shared an interaction with a concerned community member and reiterated that students who left campus were not on school grounds and were subject to standard attendance procedures. The members emphasized that there are multiple perspectives on the issue and expressed a willingness to engage students in respectful dialogue, including sharing perspectives as a veteran on the rights and responsibilities associated with peaceful protest.

Board members thanked Superintendent Chris Woods for timely communication to families and stressed the importance of sharing accurate information. Members noted that while there are many opinions circulating, particularly on social media, community members are encouraged to seek facts directly from the district. Several shared that conversations with concerned individuals were productive once accurate information was provided.

Members acknowledged the challenges of addressing misinformation and division within the community and encouraged respectful communication, civic engagement, and collaboration. Comments emphasized the importance of modeling critical thinking, civil discourse, and working together despite differing viewpoints.

Board members concluded by reaffirming their commitment to supporting students, staff, and the broader community, and noted that school presentations serve as an important reminder of the purpose and value of their work.

Student Representative Comments:

Student Representatives expressed appreciation for the comprehensive RMS presentation, highlighting the strong focus on literacy, AVID, and the Structured Literacy Program. They shared personal reflections on the importance of reading, noting that while academic requirements can sometimes make reading feel challenging, developing effective study strategies and finding engaging approaches can significantly improve learning outcomes.

One Student Representative shared a personal example of helping a peer improve in biology by introducing multiple study resources and methods tailored to different learning styles. The experience underscored the importance of teaching students how to study and helping them discover strategies that work best for them. Representatives emphasized that reading and literacy are foundational skills that impact academic success, confidence, and overall well-being. Student Representatives also commended the RMS student presenters for their courage and strong public-speaking skills, noting how impressive it is for middle school students to speak before the Board. The RMS band performance was praised as outstanding.

In addition, appreciation was expressed for impactful teachers, including recognition of a retiring teacher for his meaningful contributions to students.

Overall, Student Representatives expressed strong support for the highlighted programs and appreciation for the opportunities and growth being provided to students.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Superintendent Chris Woods shared information about the district's Unified Basketball program, which partners high school students with and without special needs to compete together. Games are held over four Saturdays at area high schools, including Olympia, Tumwater, North Thurston, River Ridge, Timberline, and Yelm. The Superintendent encouraged board members and the community to attend the final home event, noting the positive and inclusive experience the program provides for students.

Superintendent Woods reported that the district's next binding conditions meeting with ESD and OSPI will take place on the 18th. At that meeting, officials will review budget adjustments made to date, including the recent resolution, to assess progress toward financial stability. He noted that outcomes may include continued monitoring or additional financial oversight if sufficient progress is not demonstrated.

He also reminded the Board of the upcoming study session to review 15 policy and procedure updates, many of which reflect required changes due to legislative updates. The policies will follow

the standard review and adoption process. Additional discussion regarding budget planning and potential capital fund transfers will also occur.

The Superintendent shared information about an upcoming Boys & Girls Club of Yelm fundraiser on February 24 and encouraged participation.

In closing, Superintendent Woods reiterated his commitment to transparency. He outlined the district's general approach to addressing issues—prioritizing student and staff matters first, followed by family concerns, and then social media issues. He noted that while misinformation on social media can require response, the district must balance communication efforts to ensure time and energy remain focused primarily on supporting students and staff. He thanked board members for their ongoing efforts to respond to questions and share accurate information within the community.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Approved by:

/S/Chris M. Woods
Secretary to the Board

/S/Casey Shaw
Board President