Yelm Community Schools, District No. 2

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MINUTES

of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, May 14, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill Hauss, Denise Hendrickson, Ryan Jewell, Frank King

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Hannah Hiiva, Cali Stein

CALLED TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice President Bill Hauss called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

FORT STEVENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Principal Lisa Crowell presented Fort Stevens Elementary's 2025–26 School Improvement Plan, highlighting the school's focus on learning, belonging, and community. She shared strategies to improve attendance, strengthen Tier I instruction, support MTSS and PLC work, and increase student engagement. The presentation also emphasized fostering a culture of dignity, expanding student leadership and recognition opportunities, and strengthening family partnerships and two-way communication. Ms. Crowell shared positive kindergarten learning growth data and outlined future leadership priorities centered on continued instructional improvement, student voice, and increased family involvement.

AUDIENCE

Superintendent's Comments

The superintendent outlined the district's comprehensive administrator hiring process, emphasizing the collaborative involvement of Human Resources, staff, students, families, and board representatives in selecting school leaders. The process includes application screening, building-level review committees, staff and student interview activities, reference checks, and finalist interviews with district leadership and board representatives.

The superintendent then introduced three new administrators for the 2026–27 school year: Brandon Pontius as principal of Lackamas Elementary, Kaiya Burgess as principal of Ridgeline Middle School, and Felicia Sandbacken as assistant principal at Yelm High School. Remarks highlighted each administrator's leadership qualities, relationship-building skills, commitment to students and staff, and strong connections with their school communities. Each administrator shared appreciation for the opportunity and expressed excitement about serving students, staff, and families in their new roles.

Community Comments

Comments were presented by Will Gunstrom, Tamara Gunstrom and Wyatt Mendel.

NEW BUSINESS

INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS – APPROVED

NEW HIRES	POSITION	EFFECTIVE
Lyanna Aragon	OSS BSA	4/21/2026
Allison Des Rochers	YHS Teacher-Sports Med/Health Science	9/1/2026
Brandon Pontius	LK Principal	7/1/2026
Alicia Sullivan	MP SPED Paraeducator	4/21/2026

Tutaumua Tamaalevea	YHS Coach-Head Football	8/18/2026
Bailey Whalen	YHS Coach-Head Volleyball	9/1/2026

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Erica Kautz	YHS SPED Paraeducator	9/1/2026 -12/18/2026

RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS / TERMINATIONS

Brittany Babkirk	YHS Athletic Trainer	6/10/2026 Resignation
Cynthia Barber	MK Instructional Paraeducator	8/31/2026 Retirement
Jody-Anne Campbell	SW Instructional Paraeducator	5/6/2026 Resignation
Amber Coggeshall	YHS SPED Paraeducator	5/15/2026 Resignation
Skylar Cole	OSS ESA-School Social Worker	8/31/2026 Resignation
Deanna Farmer	Food Service Sat. Cook	4/23/2026 Resignation
Stacey Jensen	RMS ESA-Counselor	7/31/2026 Retirement
Debra Miles	YHS OP V	6/30/2026 Resignation
Lindsay Mintz	OSS ESA-School Psychologist	8/31/2026 Resignation
Vivita Rabo	SW Teacher-SpEd SELF	8/31/2026 Resignation
Alondra Rodriquez Velez	OSS ML Paraeducator	5/15/2026 Resignation

STAFFING CHANGES:

Kaiya Burgess	YMS Assistant Principal to RMS Principal	7/1/2026
Matthew Mounts	YHS Athletic Director to Teacher-Ag Science	9/9/2026
Felecia Stenbakken	YHS Dean of Students to Assistant Principal	7/1/2026

REQUESTS FOR WAIVERS FOR TEACHING OUT OF ENDORSEMENT:

Ashlie Hutzell	RMS Math	4/13/2026 LT Sub
Shilah De Luna	FS PE	4/13/2026 LT Sub

M/Denise Hendrickson; S/Frank King; Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 08-25-26 – REDUCED EDUCATION PLAN - APPROVED

M/Frank King; S/Ryan Jewell; Motion carried unanimously.

POLICY REPLACEMENT – FIRST READING FOR REVIEW

CATEGORY	POLICY	ACTION
Critical	**3122** Excused and Unexcused Absences	Replacement
Critical	**3122 Procedure**	Replacement

PSE CONTRACE 2025-2028 – APPROVED

M/Frank King; S/Ryan Jewell; Motion carried unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS

A board member expressed appreciation for the district's engagement efforts and the positive impact of male role models participating in early education activities. The board members also commended district staff for their handling of a recent situation and thanked Mill Pond Elementary for hosting the meeting.

The board members shared observations from visiting classrooms, including reading with kindergarten students, and highlighted the enthusiasm of young learners. Additional comments recognized student leadership opportunities, including ideas for engaging students in school projects such as organizing lost and found items. The board member also noted the value of career pathway programs for high school students, particularly those interested in becoming future educators, and reminded the community about the upcoming Dollars for Scholars auction.

Student Representative Comments:
The student representatives commented positively on efforts to build belonging and improve attendance, particularly through elementary student leadership opportunities and events that bring families and the community together. Appreciation was also expressed for the ongoing respectful discussions around curriculum, emphasizing the importance of transparency and communication with families while ensuring state requirements are met. Additionally, Rebecca Rankin recognized a retiring high school library staff member for her contributions to students and the school community.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Chris Woods thanked Mill Pond Principal, Becky Fowler and her staff for their presentation and for their transparency in sharing both successes and areas needing improvement, including student attendance. He expressed appreciation for school leaders and staff who openly engage in these important conversations with the community.

Superintendent Woods also recognized **Education Support Professionals Week**, acknowledging the contributions of support staff across the district, including paraeducators, custodians, maintenance and grounds staff, transportation, and technology personnel, whose work is essential to the daily operations of the schools.

He highlighted Ridgeline Middle School's recent recognition as an AVID National Demonstration School, noting the significance of the designation and the positive impact the program has on student confidence and academic growth.

Superintendent Woods thanked the Board of Directors for engaging in thoughtful discussions and emphasized the importance of community involvement and advocacy at the state level to support decisions that best serve students.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:	Approved by:
/S/Chris M. Woods	/S/Casey Shaw
Secretary to the Board	Board President