

# League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman School District Date: 11 October 2023  
Observer Reporting: Ndambuki Length of Meeting: 54 minutes  
Members Present: Allison Munch-Rotolo, Nathan Roberts, Arron Carter

Other District Personnel Present: Bob Maxwell, Joe Thornton, Diane Hodge, Roberta Kramer (arrived ten minutes before the end of the meeting, was returning from Portland)

Others Present: Pat Doumit (Title I, CORE + KES), six other teachers representing different grade levels, they did not introduce themselves, many in the audience from KES community who were not visible from the recording

Members Absent: Jim Evermann, Amanda Tanner

**Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:** *Include in this section 1) issues discussed that relate to League priorities or positions. Do you recommend local league action? If so, please refer to the League position that supports your suggestion.*

## **Quality of Instruction:**

- Professional Learning Community (PLC) time being spent on common formative assessment development
  - Superintendent was at KES PLC on Monday observing and celebrated their “alignment”
- Students leaving PSD for on-line educational options has doubled since 2019, they take their school funding with them to the district that sponsors the on-line program meaning that these exits are a loss of revenue for PSD
  - 2019-2020 school year 24 students opted for on-line options
  - 2020-2021 school year 51 students opted for on-line options and did not come back after the pandemic
  - 2021-2022 school year 52 students opted for on-line options
  - 2022-2023 school year 51 students opted for on-line options
  - 2023-2024 school year 56 students opted for on-line options
  - Director Carter asked if the district does exit interviews to determine the why --
    - No, but we’re thinking about it...
- Other students opting for other districts in the region (Colfax, Palouse, Colton, etc.) 79
  - Kindergarten has the fewest number of students than any other grade level this year, it is “kind of a trend” according to the Superintendent
    - Budgeted for 225, then went to 200 in the budget for this year but, “came in at 175”
      - “Last spring Washington State birth rates were down 8%”
      - BUT NOT IN WHITMAN COUNTY:

Geography	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
San Juan	107	102	110	100	85	84	74	83
Skagit	1,411	1,393	1,350	1,392	1,387	1,430	1,510	1,442
Skamania	95	89	109	100	93	100	49	36
Snohomish	9,855	9,756	9,339	9,669	9,754	9,877	10,031	9,743
Spokane	5,865	5,846	5,718	5,809	5,728	5,886	6,096	6,002
Stevens	453	458	407	375	429	432	438	429
Thurston	3,011	3,126	2,942	3,063	3,105	3,071	3,193	3,058
Wahkiakum	32	29	26	21	36	27	11	22
Walla Walla	514	604	559	618	604	613	660	666
Whatcom	1,955	2,022	2,003	1,992	2,161	2,164	2,276	2,364
Whitman	418	375	378	348	361	418	407	409
Yakima	3,449	3,383	3,563	3,489	3,688	3,788	3,930	3,991

- Goal of Affirmative Action is to “match the staff to the student population” according to the Superintendent
  - PSD is 35% minority and 65% white currently according to OSPI
  - Goal of district to hire one minority administrator, met goal
  - Goal of district to hire five minority staff, met goal
    - BUT lost 11 minority staff so NET LOSS OF 6
      - (One minority teacher left after a terrible experience of being singled out and humiliated by a district TOSA as reported by union representatives)
- Met with Pacific NW Anti-defamation League last week
  - Contacted due to request by community, ADL had talked many times with community members
  - President of School Board
    - Met over zoom for 1 hour
    - Not just a Pullman thing, national
    - Offered materials regarding how to have conversations in the hallway, cafeteria, etc.
    - Encouraging a community level conversation as well as problem solving
    - ADL will formulate a plan and return in a month or two
- 1063.98 contact hours meets the minimum basic education compliance
  - State requires 180 days X 6 hours of instruction/day = 1080

### **Responsible Use of Public Funds:**

- Pullman district office has been added to the list of historic places so district could not ever demolish the building or change the outside of the building (not including rain gutters)
- Sale of Johnson property will be a six-step process
  - District must declare the real property as surplus
    - Completed
  - The Board must obtain a market value appraisal for the real property
    - Completed
  - Publish notice in the newspaper
    - District may not sell the property at least 45 days following the newspaper announcement
  - No law requiring bids, but district policy says that bids may be secured
    - District leadership will be working with attorneys on legal wording of bid statement in newspaper
  - If the value of the real property exceeds \$70,000, the board must hold a public hearing
    - Superintendent recommends that the board select an upcoming board meeting to break out and do a public hearing that way, it must be announced two consecutive weeks in a row in the newspaper before it is scheduled to take place
  - It is also required that the district go through a realtor and determine commission, etc.

- The selected bid has to hit 90% of the appraised value, if that isn't the case, you can't sell it, you have to wait another year
- Risk Management
  - Insurance has increased in the last year 42%, over the last five years almost doubled
    - District has no choice but to continue carrying the insurance coverage at the same level as we have currently
    - Increase is primarily due to the realization that the replacement costs for a building are high

**Process & Protocol:** (Observations about participants and procedures of the meeting)

*e.g., Did the members appear to have done their "homework"? Were members courteous to each other and the public? Was access to materials for certain agenda items available to you?*

**Your additional comments/opinions:**

The school highlighted in this board meeting was Kamiak Elementary. Often at work sessions or board meetings a different building is showcased. The school principal comes usually with a group of staff or students or both. The principal, Even Hecker, was notably absent. It was Kamiak's assistant principal who represented Kamiak. In introducing the Kamiak staff the President of the School Board did not explain why the principal was not present.