

# League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman School District Date: 8 November 2023  
Observer Reporting: Ndambuki Length of Meeting: 52 minutes  
Members Present: Allison Munch-Rotolo, Nathan Roberts, Arron Carter, Jim Evermann, Amanda Tanner

Other District Personnel Present: Joe Thornton, Diane Hodge, Roberta Kramer, Andy Johnson (Director of Special Services)

Others Present: Juston Pollestad (PHS principal), Grace Grow (district math teacher on special assignment)

Members Absent: Superintendent Maxwell

**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:**

- Lincoln Middle School spotlight cancelled due to illness
- Graduation rate increased 3% from 93% to 96% for the class of 2023 highest percent in the last five years
- Board will state a land acknowledgement that the district is built upon Native lands at all public meetings in the future
- Special Education Director is new this year after two years of the District not having a Director

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

- Special Education Program
  - FES—1 Teacher, 1 Para-educator; JES--1.5 Teachers, 1 ILC Teacher, 5 Para-educators; KES--1.5 Teachers, 1 ILC Teacher, 5 Para-educators; SES—1 Teacher, 2 Para-educators; Preschool—2 Teachers, 2 Para-educators
  - Staffing challenges with Speech and Language Pathologist
    - Currently have assistants at elementaries and LMS (sixth grade)
  - Occupational Therapist
    - Virtual
  - Para-educators, “difficult to get people in the applicant pool”
  - Five new Special Education Teachers this year
- Added a transition program at the high school
  - Needs assessment identified that students had a need for pre-employment and employment skills
  - School and Community based resources taught by a teacher new to the district
  - Both off-campus placements as well as on-campus (students, “have taken over jobs that we would have otherwise had to contract out”)
  - Get high school credit for work hours
  - Developmental Services Board for the County is excited about this transitional program
- Applying for “Safety Net” funding
  - Some students have needs that are very expensive
    - When a district has expended funds, it can apply for this money (Federal monies fund up to 13% of the student population; PSD has 13.86% of the student population qualifying

so logically, they have more students than they are funded for—cleaning up the referral process may improve that situation because the numbers for the district imply that they are over-qualifying students for Special Education services)

- District hasn't had much luck in the past in qualifying
- New direction from the state has helped the district to focus application on students who needs are expensive
- Requirement-100% of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are "in compliance"
  - Currently 380
- Auditing all plans
- Tightening up the Special Education referral process and the Section 504 referral process with stakeholders (teachers, paras, and school counselors)
- Year-end financial report
  - 2022-2023 student population was greater than what had been budgeted -- the first time in several years
  - This year, enrollment is lower than what had been budgeted
  - Variance in revenue over budget
    - Reduction in local taxes of \$51,000 from what had been budgeted
      - The Assessor is getting the taxes paid that are due
  - SPECIAL EDUCATION IS AT 377, 30 students more than expected.
- Excess revenues over expenditures (\$211,112)
- \$2.3 million will not be carrying over to 2023-2024 from the previous year
  - All one-time federal funds related to Covid-19
  - District chose to "keep several positions" to "keep class sizes lower"
    - The state already funds K-2 at a rate that is intended to keep class sizes lower
    - Funding these positions "will be coming out of our reserves this year"
- \$7.5 million fund balance for reserves passed by the Board some years ago which is enough to cover one month's payroll in an emergency