

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman School District State of the District Date: 12 April 2023
Observer Reporting: Ndambuki Length of Meeting: 50 minutes
Members Present: Allison Munch-Rotolo, Amanda Tanner, Jim Evermann, Arron Carter

Other District Personnel Present: Bob Maxwell, Roberta Kramer, Joe Thornton, Diane Hodge

Others Present: Evan Hecker (Principal Kamiak ES), Justin Pollestad (PHS Principal), Cameron Grow (LMS Principal)

Members Absent: Nathan Roberts

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:

- Asian/Pacific Islander club took over the multicultural event from the English Language Development program which lost momentum during the pandemic. They teamed with International Programs at WSU to hold the event on Friday evening. The event (from newspaper reports) was very well attended and enjoyed by all.
- Added information about language access into the student handbook. This is the result of a change in state law (<https://lawfilesexult.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1153-S2.SL.pdf#page=1>). It used to be that if a district had fewer than 10% English language learners they were not required to provide translated documents in the first language of families to the extent possible. However, federal law has been clear since 1974 (Lau v. Nichols: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/lau.html>) that schools must provide translation and interpreting services to make equal access to education. Pullman school district has now complied with federal law via a clear mandate from the state. However, having information in a student handbook about language access that is itself in English doesn't really mean much for the families that need or would benefit from language access. This seems to be a letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law type of action.

Responsible Use of Public Funds:

- Poverty rate as measured by Free and Reduced Lunch qualification (family must complete paperwork to qualify) has increased by almost 5% between last year and this year. This is very likely due to the change in the child credit calculation going back to normal after the pandemic funding. Nonetheless, the poverty rate at Jefferson ES and Kamiak ES is more than double the rates at Franklin ES and Sunnyside ES. This creates a disparity amongst the elementary schools that needs to be directly addressed. The class sizes are also disparate along the same lines.
- Savings for taxpayers over the next three years on the interest on bonds will be over \$3.5 Million.
- Pullman Transit service for secondary students will be very similar to what it was this school year; students will arrive before classes start, they will be issued a free bus pass from PT for next year, there will be pick ups on each of the four hills, maps of stops/routes will be on PT website as well through district website, some routes will require transfer at the transfer station on Davis Way, number of stops will be reduced so some students may have to walk a few more blocks, yearly passes available before the end of the school year, free for anyone 18 and under, monies come from federal grant.

- Scholarship applications through the Pullman Education Foundation for post-secondary education—Community College, University, Trade-school—were due on Friday, April 14th, applications were available on the PHS website.