

# League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman School District State of the District Date: 26 July 2023  
Observer Reporting: Ndambuki Length of Meeting: 1 hour 3 minutes  
Members Present: Nathan Roberts, Allison Munch-Rotolo, Jim Evermann, Arron Carter

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

Others Present: Debbie Crabtree (Assistant Principal Pullman High School)

Members Absent: Amanda Tanner, Roberta Kramer

**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:**

- Community Engagement Board (aka truancy board) met with 30 students (secondary) and their families who also met with counselors, of those 8 students were referred to the court for truancy court.
- 7 Students participating in the state's Open Doors program working on a GED.
  - 4 students did earn their GED this year. The other 3 are still in the process and will be finishing up in the fall "probably."
- Elementary students
  - Three families that they are working with on truancy issues, none of which have been referred to court.
- As a district we need to work on addressing those needs with early intervention at all grade levels so it's consistent.
- Met again with Dr. Sutton from WSU:
  - Looked over survey results.
  - Planned trainings (at least two).
  - Adjusting two foundational classes to meet the indicated needs/wants of the survey results.
  - The date is set for the training, city of Pullman (voluntary) trainings will already have been completed by the time the school district training takes place.

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

- School Board Retreat met 12 July for an entire day over "various topics."
- District Area 2 promoting the to-be open position for the retiring Munch-Rotolo Board member.
  - The hospital district had a similar situation where no one filed for the ballot.
  - So, they conducted interviews, maybe we could do that.
  - The special filing period is August 7-9.
  - The district has been reaching out to the community through social media.
  - Per Daily News article, position will be filled by Professor of Communications, Lisa Jones.
- PLC conference, "starting to see results already."
- Hosting Wildland firefighters as staging area for local fire, "glad it's now and not September."
- Active Shooter Training in early August at Jefferson Elementary School.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> of August work session for the School Board.
- Replacement levy coming up in February 2024
  - The law changed but b/c of timing it hadn't affected the PPS until now.
    - The board will have to appoint up to a three-person committee for "pro" statement and a "con" statement due to the auditor for the voter's pamphlet in December of this year.
- 2023-2024 school year budget is available on the district's website or at the district office.

- Budget for two additional replacement buses.
- 2.2 million deficit is covered by reserves.
- Staffing is down slightly and is not expected to increase over the next four years' projections.
  - FTE approximately 36 positions are underfunded.
  - Total underfunded is approximately \$7.4 million.
    - Only basic education and district-wide support, it doesn't include any special programs.
    - Local levy monies will make up about \$6.1 million offsetting the underfunded expenditures.
    - The remainder will be covered by reserves.
  - Revenue increase over last year will be \$374,000.
    - BUT the district is losing the federal pandemic recovery from learning loss monies.
  - Regular Instruction year over year increase 8%
  - Special Education year over year increase 15%
  - Vocational Education year over year increase 2% increase
  - Support Services year over year increase 4% increase
- The last year of the four-year projected budget anticipates a \$1.6 million deficit so, "we will have to increase our levy amount which we haven't done since 2014."
  - That means going from a 7.5% year-end reserve balance to a negative balance within the span of four years' time.
- The public hearing was August 9<sup>th</sup>.
- 10 cent increase in school lunches for all grade levels was recommended based upon a federal formula.
- State and Federal Grants approved.

**Your additional comments/opinions:**

It would be interesting to know how many districts in the state of WA the size of Pullman have a special education director.