

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman School District Date: 23 August 2023
Observer Reporting: Ndambuki Length of Meeting: 39 minutes
Members Present: Allison Munch-Rotolo, Jim Evermann, Amanda Tanner

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

Others Present:

Members Absent: Nathan Roberts, Arron Carter

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:

- Introduction of newly hired Director of Special Services, Andy Johnson
- Each Principal is responsible for establishing the discipline rules and staff are being “trained” on those this week
- School Improvement plans will be distributed to the School Board members this fall
- Report on negotiations with the Pullman Education Association
 - Majority of negotiated changes have to do with lowering the Special Education teachers’ caseload limits
 - Additional pay for meetings that extend way beyond the regular workday
 - Extended days for school psychologists, occupational therapists, and special education teachers
- Major Equity improvement mandated by the State of WA
 - “Currently schools withhold diplomas if there’s any outstanding fees and fines.”
 - Now the state is requiring that ONLY if fees and fines exceed \$1,000 will districts be permitted to withhold diplomas
 - As soon as a student pays down the amount owed below \$1,000 the district has to release the diploma

Responsible Use of Public Funds:

- Introduction of newly hired Director of Special Services, Andy Johnson
- Transportation update
 - Introducing supplemental “express” busing routes (“PSD Expresses) to provide additional options for secondary in-town students (middle and high school students) to get to school on time
 - Had re-adjust at the last-minute b/c Pullman Transit just finalized their routes and schedules, these changes were less convenient for PSD than previous routes
 - More PSD students are having to transfer
 - PSD Express routes start from where a rural route ends in order to shuffle students across town
 - Students have Fair Free Youth access supported by state funds, for students under the age of 18
 - Part of the goal of these passes is for youth to learn about public transit and how to use it
 - Link on district’s website for route and map information
 - Shared average daily ridership to LMS and PHS
 - E.g., 36 students needed to travel from Sunnyside ES to PHS, 83 students from Military Hill to LMS

- Express stops were then determined based upon the specific number of students at each Pullman Transit stop
- Another grant application is being made for the purchase of another electric bus
- Prime Services contract approved (allows PSD to join Spokane Public Schools in the purchase of food for the school meal program, creating a larger purchasing power than our small district alone could do, reduces costs)
- Approved school secretaries 3-year bargaining agreement

Your additional comments/opinions:

The introduction of Andy Johnson as the new Director of Special Services is placed in both of our areas of interest because he can both positively impact the quality of instruction for students with special needs, but it must also be noted that PSD qualifies more students for Special Education than the Federal Government allows as the statistical average that they will fund (13%). This ultimately costs the district more of its local funding than arguably it should.