

# League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman School District Date: 14 February 2024  
Observer Reporting: Ndambuki Length of Meeting: 1 hour 40 minutes  
Members Present: Nathan Roberts, Arron Carter, Amanda Tanner, Lisa Waananen Jones, Craig Nelson

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

Others Present: Juston Pollestad (PHS principal), Jessie Campbell (Director Nutrition Services),

Members Absent: Bob 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:**

- Pullman High School FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America)
  - Career and Technical Education (CTE)
  - 46 students attended state competition
- Environmental Club went to Olympia for an Environmental Summit meeting
- Equity Update
  - Superintendent met with Adan Suarez, Community Development Director for the Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) for the State of Washington ([adan.suarez@cha.wa.gov](mailto:adan.suarez@cha.wa.gov))
    - Recall that Spanish-speaking students are the #1 language minority group in the District overtaking Arabic speakers last year
    - Purpose of meeting was to discuss the needs of Hispanic students in our schools
      - What services might be available that we might not even be aware of
      - Discussed student attendance challenges and potential solutions
      - Discussed partnering with CHA for upcoming cultural night that the student AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) group will be hosting
      - Discussed working with CHA to create and conduct a survey and/or focus meetings
        - To create opportunities to hear from our families
  - Learning Improvement Day (LID) day on Friday February 16<sup>th</sup> with Dr. Sutton

## **Public Comment:**

- Proposal Introduced by commenters
  - The commenter has heard students and their parents speaking to lived experiences in PSD regarding racial equity, inclusion, belonging
  - 4110 & 4110P school board policy are relevant
- The Speaker suggested formation of a Citizen Advisory Committee
  - Make changes in demographics in the district
  - Ensure a safe, healthy learning environment for the diverse student body
  - Should include members representing the diversity of the community
- Purpose
  - Support efforts to establish a comprehensive framework
- Suggested committee membership
  - 1 parent and/or 1 faculty from each school
  - At least ½ from historically marginalized groups
  - 1 employed in academic field
  - 1 community member

- Palouse CORE (Council on Racial Equality) select in collaboration with School Board
  - Second year by recommendation of current advisory committee
- Suggested rules and Responsibilities
  - Recommendations based on research, best practice, personal experience
  - Curriculum, assessments
  - WASSDA, state board of education, education opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee (state of WA)
  - Evaluate the existing reporting mechanism for harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination
- Suggested communication and outreach policy:
  - Committee should report biannually with interim community outreach in order to:
    - Build trust
    - Maintain transparency
    - Be accessible as reference documents
- Suggested actions
  - Request this proposal be placed on the school board's 6 March work session
  - Request that the Board's response to this proposal be included as an agenda item by the 24 April regular board meeting agenda
  - In place and ready to function by the regular board meeting on 10 July
- A petition is circulating (see full petition in comments section below) amongst parents and community members
  - There is concern about the renewal of Superintendent's contract without public discussion
    - His contract should require public discussion
    - Wording of petition and signatures should be provided

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

- The Board pulled the personnel report off of the consent agenda and moved it to an action item
- Culture Fair (FES) in cooperation with the WSU Office of Civic Engagement
- Thank community for levy approvals (74% Replacement Levy, 78% Technology Levy)
- Nutrition services has staffing issues
  - Position posted for 1.5 years that was just filled in the last few weeks
- Personnel Report Discussion
  - Extend and Renew Superintendent's contract for another year (notification of Superintendent required)
    - This process could be changed in the new contract going forward if the Board so chooses
    - His current contract ends at the end of June 2024
    - At that point in time, the contract, in its entirety, can be negotiated
  - There have been requests for a copy of the contract and copies of evaluations
    - Board Director Tanner "They were made available at the district office"
    - According to the Board President, Board Director Carter "did review past evaluations"
    - According to the Board President, "they were available for three weeks" through the month of January
    - Board Director Nelson was instructed by the President that "Anyone could see them now if he wanted to."
- The Pullman Educational Support Personnel (ESP) Bargaining Agreement for 2023-2025 has some changes in response to public comments.
  - Incorporate identified classified central district office positions into the CURRENT ESP bargaining unit
  - Addition of a new wage schedule with 4.7% increases for this year and next school year
  - Increase in percentage between steps (3 to 3.5 this year and 3.5 to 4 next year)
  - Created a new section around working conditions which includes professional development which is in response to public comment that support staff are not included in diversity trainings

**Observer additional comments/opinions:**

- Petition being circulated to the Pullman School Board

Petition for Transparency, Fair Compensation,  
Accountability, and Inclusive Hiring Practices in Pullman Public Schools

Dear Members of the Pullman School Board,

We, the undersigned members of the Pullman community, are writing to express our concerns and advocate for important changes within Pullman Public Schools. We believe that the following measures will contribute to a more equitable and inclusive educational system:

**Market Rate for All Staff:** We request a comprehensive market rate analysis for all staff employed by Pullman Public Schools, with a particular focus on ensuring that compensation packages are not only competitive but also address any potential disparities affecting minority employees. In the interest of fiscal responsibility and equity, we request a temporary freeze in salary increases for staff members who are currently being compensated above the market rate for their respective roles within Pullman Public Schools.

**360-Degree Evaluation for the Superintendent:** We propose the implementation of a 360-degree evaluation for the Superintendent of Pullman Public Schools, ensuring that the evaluation process considers the impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Inclusive Hiring Practices:** We strongly urge the Pullman School Board to review, and update hiring practices to more fairly evaluate and promote diversity among job applicants, particularly for leadership positions.

In conclusion, we, the undersigned, request that the Pullman School Board carefully consider and implement the aforementioned measures to promote fairness, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity within Pullman Public Schools. We believe that these changes will contribute to a positive, diverse, and inclusive learning environment for all students and foster a sense of trust and collaboration within the community.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. We look forward to seeing positive changes that will benefit the entire Pullman Public Schools community.”