

Highland School District #203
Board Work Study Session
Highland District Office
December 2, 2019, 7:00 a.m.

The December 2, 2019 Board Work Study Session was convened by Board Chair Nikki Keller at 7:10 a.m. Also present were Board Members David Barnes and Lupita Flores; Superintendent Mark Anderson, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman. Board Members Matt Barker and Carlos López were absent.

Luann Anderson and Michael Kranz joined the meeting at 7:11 a.m.

1- Introductions were made. Luann is the 21st Century Coordinator for MWC and Michael is the coordinator for TIS. Using a PowerPoint presentation, they took turns explaining about 21st Century. It is an afterschool enrichment program run by the non-profit group, Alterra, which recently secured a five-year grant for the program. This is the third five-year grant HSD has had and we are very fortunate to have them, especially for our size of district. The afterschool program is open to any student and takes place Monday through Friday. Highland contributes space for the program plus approximately \$5000 towards transportation which is provided to students Monday through Thursday each month except the month of December. Per grant requirements, students that sign up must attend 30 days throughout the year. Data is collected to monitor growth and is reported to OSPI. 21st Century must also provide a four-week summer program. The program provides students with help with homework including instruction on good study habits, art projects, a healthy snack, and enjoyable family events. 21st Century (Alterra) employs tutors including a para-educator from the building who knows the students and the work they are doing. A couple members of the board mentioned the benefit to their students who have attended the 21st Century program.

Luann and Michael left the meeting at 7:23 a.m.

2-Board Reorganization Discussion: After a brief discussion it was agreed that Nikki will retain the position of Chair, David will retain the position of Vice-Chair, Lupita will retain the position of WIAA Rep, Carlos will assume the role of Title IX Rep that Matt is vacating, and Cindy will assume the role of Legislative Rep.

3-HEA Negotiations Update: Mark reported that negotiations are moving along slowly but positively. Areas of discussion include discipline of students and insurance.

Francis joined the meeting at 7:31 a.m.

6-ASB Rule Changes: Francis said that legislators implemented some changes to ASB rules and reporting due to large districts having a 'pay to play' system for extracurricular activities. This system can prevent low-income students from participating. Districts our size don't have that issue since pretty much any student can turn out for a sport regardless of their financial situation. The fee to participate at Highland is low at \$30 for an entire year of sports plus free entry to regular season sports competitions that have an entry fee. However, the legislation has been put in place so now we must have rules to ensure equity and potentially, a discounted athletic fee. Francis said our policies are adequate but we may need to look at discounting the ASB fee to satisfy the new reporting requirements, which start this year with the first one due by January 2020 for the 2018-

2019 SY. The report will include the number of students that participate in extra-curricular activities and how many are on Free/Reduced. The report must be posted to our website. After discussion the board agreed that the \$30/year for all sports and entry to games is minimal and there isn't a need to reduce it further. To increase it so it could be reduced for F/R students would unnecessarily punish those not on F/R. The other ASB thing being looked at is the allocation of collected ASB fees and who benefits the most from them. ASB fees go into the general ASB fund which is utilized by all ASB clubs but not all ASB club members have to buy an ASB to participate in their club. He and Josh will look at an option of prorating the funds so the clubs that pay the fee are the principal users of the money received.

Francis left the meeting at 7:43 a.m.

7-Think Twice Program: Mark reported that two reps from Life Choices of Yakima came to meet with him about the Think Twice Program, a series of instruction for students about making safe choices. After discussion the board asked that the reps come to the next work study session to present to them and so they can ask questions.

Kirsten Lenz, Director of Student Services Intern, joined the meeting at 7:50 a.m.

4-Student Services/SpEd Update: Kirsten reported that the Special Education department is a bit overwhelmed at the moment due to one teacher being out on unexpectedly, and an influx of high needs students. They have hired Paula Vornbrock, retired Highland Special Ed teacher, as a temp to handle some of the workload that is backing up of reporting, writing IEPs and testing referred students. In addition to there being 10 referrals just from MWC kindergarten, we also have new students with IEPs. Kirsten explained the lengthy and involved process of processing a new student with an IEP and the particular difficulties encountered with two of the most recent arrivals who have behavioral diagnoses rather than learning or cognitive disabilities. One important rule is to provide a 'Least Restrictive Environment'. Larger districts have a department for behavioral students and a behavioral specialist but Highland does not. If we can't, as a district, meet the needs of a student we must pay both the education and transportation costs for that student to attend a school that has a program or resources suitable to them. Mark said we are looking at short-term and long-term solutions including having a social-emotional specialist to help the students and come alongside the teachers to instruct them on how to instruct and interact with these students. The trend of an increase in students with trauma and family dysfunction due to drug use, sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect, is being seen at all school districts.

5-Staffing/Budget Discussion: Mark said we are still looking at transitioning staff to meet the needs of the larger number of special needs students. There is a need for a FT counselor at both MWC and TIS. We are fortunate that we have had as low a population of special needs students as we have had to this point. At MWC there are several behavioral needs students that aren't in Special Ed [and don't belong there] that pull Principal Mindy Schultz away from her principal duties to help supervise and control them. We need to revamp our system due to this trend of having more students with social/emotional needs that result in behavioral problems. The board gave approval for Mark to make whatever changes he deems appropriate to restructure staff to meet these growing needs.

Kirsten left the meeting at 8:28 a.m.

The board continued the discussion about staffing and special needs students. Mark said there is the possibility of applying to the state for financial assistance with special education costs when there is a need. A while back, Highland paid the ESD for a couple of years for a program to send

behavioral needs students but stopped due to a lack of need in our district. That has now changed and we may rejoin the program. The important piece for Highland is to have a behavioral specialist in district.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Chair

Secretary