

BOARD BRIEFING.....April 17, 2009

Yakima Public Schools District Number 7

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Yakima Public Schools met April 17, 2009, at Franklin Middle School, opening with the Pledge of Allegiance. A brief summary of the meeting follows.

Franklin Middle School – Principal Bill Hilton asked students to report to the board about programs they participate in this year. AVID students shared the program has helped them improve grades, gain study guides and be more willing to help others. AVID strategies are used school-wide. A student brought her award-winning science fair project to show the board. In its third year, the science fair featured 680 projects and involved community members. Two students reported the before- and after-school 21st Century Program has helped them with their grades. A student shared about her experiences in the CORE program, which teaches values, brings students together from district middle schools, and offers leadership training and tutoring with community members. Mr. Hilton reported on Franklin’s six-period day compared to the eight-period schedule used at the other middle schools. Japanese and Spanish are offered for high school credits and intervention classes are available at every grade level.

Through the Student Access program, students can check their own grades. Parents for almost 600 students are following attendance and grades through Family Access. ‘Walk from Drugs,’ the science fair and a variety of family nights are examples of activities available for families. Conferencing week had ninety percent participation. Monday early release is used for whole faculty study groups and grade-level teams. Mr. Hilton reported on Franklin’s interest in piloting an International Baccalaureate program for all students. The program has been shown to help ELL and students of poverty and aligns with AVID.

The board expressed appreciation to Mr. Hilton for asking students to share about their individual experiences in various programs. Franklin is visible to the community and makes the board proud. It is evident teachers take extra time to develop student potential and their support to students is strong, especially through AVID. Superintendent Soria added that Franklin is doing a great job of preparing students for high school.

Affirmative Action Plan Update – Rick Doehle, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, reported the state requires an Affirmative Action Plan from the district every five years. YSD data in this plan is compared to local Yakima County data and the US Census and helps determine the district’s utilization of the available workforce in the community. Copies of the full plan were provided to the board for review prior to approval at the April 21 business meeting.

Issues of Board Interest –

- The Senate’s passage of HB 2261 was discussed, noting the general timeline for implementation and the lack of funding. Districts continue to wait for finalization of the state’s budget.
- The board will review all WSSDA proposals in preparation for developing their priority list for WSSDA’s consideration.
- Superintendent Soria reported the NEWS lawsuit is moving forward. HB 2261 has language of intent, with no plan in place for how the state will pay for it.
- Walt Ranta reported Perry Technical Institute shut down classes for a day to accommodate SkillsUSA competitions. Perry students and staff served as judges.