



**ESD 112 Board of Directors Retreat  
March 25, 2024**

**ROLL CALL**

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Board Members Present: Mark Hottowe, President; Susan Barker; Kevin Davis; Nancy Miller; Heidi Rosenberg; and Darlene Stickel. Superintendent Present: Tim Merlino. Cabinet Members Present: Marnie Allen, Monique Dugaw, Melissa Kreuder, Mike Nerland, Jeffrey Niess, Jodi Wall, and Kathy Whitlock. Guests: Brent Freeman, Vicki Hrdina, Katherine Livick, Elyse Mengarelli, Mary Templeton, and Kristina Wambold.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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Mark Hottowe, *President*, opened the meeting at 9:06 am on March 25, 2024, and welcomed all participants. A quorum of six members was present.

**PURPOSE OF THE DAY**

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Tim Merlino, *Superintendent*, reviewed the meeting agenda, as well as the agency mission.

**UPDATE ON THE STATE BUDGET**

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Superintendent Merlino shared a brief update on the state budget. All new funding for school districts this year amounts to an increase of approximately \$134 per student. It was noted that the percentage of K-12 funding in the state operating budget has dropped from 51% in 2019 to 43.4% this year. To increase funding to 51% of the budget, the addition to the state budget would be \$2.7 billion per year.

**STATE OF THE ESD**

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Tim Merlino, *Superintendent*, provided an update on the State of ESD 112 and the region.

- Enrollment continues to decrease or remain flat in both urban and rural areas. Staffing shortages continue to be an issue in districts and increased student behavior issues persist.
- Evergreen, Vancouver, and Washougal School Districts are making significant budget cuts including staff reductions. More districts will face cuts as budgets are developed this spring.
- The ESD is supporting legislative priorities to address school district funding shortfalls.
- ESD 112 is the largest ESD in the state in both budget and staffing. ESD 112 serves 15,670 students annually and directly serves more than 12,000 students each year.
- Superintendent Merlino shared a recap of the agency's budget history, and information on efforts to increase infrastructure to support continued growth.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES AND FORECAST FOR 2024-25.**

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ESD Leadership shared brief updates on their departments and a look forward to the 2024-25 School Year.

## **ESD 112 SUPERINTENDENT PANEL**

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Three superintendents from the region participated in a panel discussion regarding ESD 112 services and shared updates on the opportunities and challenges their districts are facing. Panelists included Brent Freeman, Wahkiakum School District; Elyse Mengarelli, Glenwood School District; and Dr. Mary Templeton, Washougal School District. Each superintendent provided an overview of their district and the challenges and opportunities each district is facing.

## **THE BIG BLUR**

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Vickei Hrdina, *Director of Career Readiness, Youth Workforce, & STEM Initiatives*, shared an update on ESD 112's work in P20 Pathway Preparation and the expansion of career-connected education services. Staffing has grown from four to twenty staff members, with plans to hire thirteen more staff in the fall. Vickei also reviewed the major concepts of "The Big Blur" which is a restructuring of education to erase the lines dividing high school, college, and careers.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

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Kristina Wambold, *Integrated EdTech Coordinator*, and Katherine Livick, *Instructional Technology Coordinator*, provided an overview of the evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI), how the ESD is supporting districts in the integration of AI technology, and examples of how ESD programs are using AI for increased efficiency.

## **STUDENT PROGRAMS FILLING THE TIERS**

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The Teaching & Learning Leadership Team: Mike Nerland, *Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning*; Jeffrey Niess, *Executive Director of Specialized Student Services*; Jodi Wall, *Executive Director of Early Care & Education*; and Kathy Whitlock, *Executive Director of Student & School Success*, briefed the board on the expansion of behavioral and mental health services to school districts since 2022.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 pm.



For questions, please contact Sara Moore, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, at (360) 952-3318 or email: [sara.moore@esd112.org](mailto:sara.moore@esd112.org). Approved minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings are kept in the ESD 112 Administration Offices and are public record.