

City Council



1049 State Avenue  
Marysville, WA 98270

**February 28, 2022**

### **Call to Order**

Mayor Nehring called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and expressed appreciation to the Marysville School District and the Marysville School Board for initiating these meetings.

### **Introductions/Roll Call**

#### Marysville School District/Board:

Keira Atchley, District 3 Director, Marysville School Board  
Chris Pearson, Interim Superintendent, Marysville School District  
Wade Rinehardt, Vice President, Board of Directors, District 4 Director  
Paul Galovin, President, District 2 Director, Marysville School Board  
Connor Krebbs, District 1 Director, Marysville School Board  
Dave Krem, Executive Director of Finance, Marysville School District  
Eneille Nelson, Executive Director of Equity and Family Engagement  
Trish Campbell, Executive Director of Special Education  
Marcus Pimpleton, Executive Director of Secondary Schools

#### City Council:

Jon Nehring, Mayor, City of Marysville  
Tom King, Marysville City Councilmember  
Kelly Richards, Marysville City Councilmember  
Kamille Norton, Marysville City Council President  
Steve Muller, Marysville City Councilmember

### **Discussion on Student Learning and Achievement**

Mayor Nehring relayed comments he has heard from the public regarding a desire to increase student test scores and graduation rates. He hopes that when people look online at the district numbers for Marysville it will be an asset and encourage people to want to live here. He believes if this issue is fixed the levies will take care of themselves.

Board President Galovin agreed this is a conversation that needs to be had. He commented the District is in the process of looking for a new superintendent who can address the many unique challenges that Marysville has.

Interim Supt. Pearson expressed appreciation for and introduced the District's leadership team. He explained they are all new, and the District is in the process of retelling the Marysville story at the district level. They have a focus on academic programs, instructional quality, family engagement, and equitable access for all students. He commented that the graduation rate has actually increased 7% over COVID. Additionally, while many districts have been losing students over that period, Marysville is not. Regarding Smarter Balance Assessment scores, they are starting over. He noted that across the country only one-third of students met the standards of state assessments. The District is highly focused on supporting students' social-emotional learning and mental health in order to improve their academic learning. He also commented on disproportionality. He noted that on any of the test scores, the white kids do pretty well. The District is also focused on meeting the needs of students who historically have not been met.

Councilmember Richards asked about differences in families' expectations about graduation. Interim Supt. Pearson explained the expectations are the same but there are complicating factors such as generational trauma. He commented on the changes in racial makeup of the District over the past few decades.

Councilmember King asked if the families are engaged in the community. Interim Supt. Pearson explained that community engagement has shifted, but families are generally engaged in essential activities such as parent-teacher conferences.

Mayor Nehring asked how the District is preparing students for life beyond school. He also noted he has heard a concern from some parents that students who travel on to college from Marysville struggle in math and science. Interim Supt. Pearson responded that what has traditionally been true in Marysville and elsewhere is that students might need to take a remedial math class to get up to speed in college. He wasn't sure what the statistics are for Marysville but offered to find out. Regarding preparing students for life he replied that there is a movement in schools toward more mastery-based credit earning via things like projects, internships, certifications, etc. Marysville is set up well for this with its Core Plus programs. They are also adding a maritime program for next year. The District is very excited about reconceptualizing what high school looks like for kids so that students are more engaged.

Councilmember Richards expressed concern about the kids' social-emotional needs and asked about plans to support them. Supt. Pearson explained that the District is way underfunded for counselors. The State is working on giving the schools more money for counselors, nurses, and school psychologists; however, even with that the schools will rely partially on local dollars to make sure there are enough counselors and mental health advocates to help students.

## **Discussion on City Actions to Support District Success**

Mayor Nehring asked how the District envisions that the City might be able to support them. He emphasized that the City has no governing authority over the School District, but they do have a massive interest in the success of the School District like everyone else in the community.

Board President Galovin commented that there is engagement in the schools, but not enough. The more opportunities to have healthy conversations around how to get to solutions the better.

Interim Superintendent Pearson spoke to the importance of good communication. He encouraged establishing good lines of communications between the City and the School District regarding issues, concerns, and opportunities.

## **School District's Invitation to be an Ambassador for the District / Discussion on School District Levy Plans**

Interim Supt. Pearson made a presentation inviting the Council to support the District's community round tables that will be coming up over the next month. Survey responses following the levy failures were reviewed. Significant themes they heard most were around fiscal responsibility, District performance, transparency and trust. The Board adopted two resolutions this week to address these issues. One would reduce levy amounts to address community concerns. There needs to be a different strategy around informational campaigning to address the issue of transparency and trust. Finally, they need to do a better job of highlighting the good work the District does. The District plans to host about ten community round tables with key communicators for the District to take questions, respond to questions, and solicit more feedback. They will also be doing school tours before every board meeting. He reviewed information about levy plans and expenditures. They are also reducing the capital projects and focusing on technology.

Councilmember King asked if the District had ever considered surplus the frontage of Totem Middle School on State Avenue between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> for commercial uses. Interim Supt. Pearson was not sure, but indicated they could look into it.

Council President Norton noted that levy rates can be very confusing. She asked for a comparison of what the average home in Marysville is paying now and what they would be paying if the levies passed. Interim Supt. Pearson explained they haven't made a slide for that yet, but they will do that for the round tables. Mayor Nehring agreed this would be very helpful and would help with the transparency issue. He also recommended explaining the financial impacts of the McCleary decision better to the community. Interim Supt. Pearson generally reviewed this and how the costs of running a school have increased. He discussed the impacts of potentially having another levy failure.

Councilmember Richards spoke in support of supporting band in addition to sports. Interim Supt. Pearson concurred and indicated they want to support students in whatever ways possible.

Councilmember Muller was disappointed that the District reduced the levy amount and asked if they might be sending the wrong message by saying they didn't really need the whole amount they asked for the first time. Board members acknowledged they could have done more the first time around, but there was also an acknowledgement that if the levy doesn't pass the second time, a lot of Marysville School District will suffer. Interim Supt. Pearson commented that based on voter feedback they know that taxes weren't the biggest issue, but they were a concern. The District tried to find a way to address that concern without making significant cuts. Councilmember Muller asked what would be different the second time. Board President Galovin commented that they intend to increase participation by hosting round tables at local schools. Additionally, the Board meetings will be at schools where they can highlight the information. He stressed that they need partners to be ambassadors in communication efforts.

Mayor Nehring suggested that, in addition to these things, the School District might want to consider communicating a new vision because that is what people are looking for. People want to know what the District is going to look like under this new leadership. He also wondered if they should give themselves more time to develop and communicate that vision instead of going right back out in April. Interim Supt. Pearson commented on the financial implications of this and explained that the District needs to know by May what their budget is for staffing purposes.

### **Discussion on meeting schedule**

Mayor Nehring asked the group to consider how often they want to meet or if they want to combine their discussions with the Government Affairs Committee.

Council President Norton expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet together and stated she is looking forward to more productive conversations to help all kids excel.

Councilmember King said he is looking forward to school meetings and tours.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

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Mayor Jon Nehring