



ESD 112 Board of Directors Business Meeting August 26, 2025

ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Heidi Rosenberg, President; LeAnne Bremer, Vice-President; Susan Barker; Kevin Davis; Mel Netzhammer, and Darlene Stickel. Superintendent Present: Tim Merlino. Cabinet Members Present: Marnie Allen, Monique Dugaw, Gavin Hottman, Mike Nerland, Jeffrey Niess, Jodi Wall, Kathy Whitlock. Guests: Joshua Fritts and Jillany Wellman. Members of the Public: Lauren Etherton, and Jeremiah.

CALL TO ORDER

The ESD 112 Board of Directors Business meeting was called to order by Heidi Rosenberg, *President*, at 3:00 pm on August 26, 2025, with a quorum of six members present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Public Comments: None

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

- Program Highlight: Therapeutic Education Programs: Dr. Joshua Fritts, *Director of Therapeutic Programs*, provided an update on the ESD 112 Therapeutic Education Programs which aim to equip students in kindergarten through age twenty-two with the behavioral, social-emotional, and academic skills needed to be able to return to their home schools and communities through the expertise of highly skilled staff and trauma-assumed, best practice approaches. The programs are currently serving students from twenty-two school districts, the Washington School for the Deaf, and Rooted Charter School.
 - The Curae Center is located on the main ESD campus in Vancouver and supports students K-5 who need additional social, emotional, and behavioral assistance while benefiting from therapy.
 - The Florens Academy, located on the main ESD campus, is a day school program for students with significant developmental and communication delays requiring intensive behavioral support catering to students who require 1:1 or 2:1 staff support due to struggles with aggression and/or self-injurious behavior.
 - The Gorge Academy is located in White Salmon and provides a supportive, therapeutic learning environment for students in grades K-8 residing within Klickitat and Skamania Counties needing behavioral interventions.
 - Quest Academy, founded in 2016, is located in Cowlitz County and provides a supportive, therapeutic learning environment for students in grades K-12 who require behavioral interventions to access their education.
 - The Spero Center is located on the ESD main campus in Vancouver and provides a therapeutic educational environment for students in grades 6-12 whose mental health challenges affect their school attendance.

The programs have all increased enrollment to better serve the needs of component districts. All programs have focused on creating a well-rounded school approach with special events and other offerings students would experience if they attended their home schools.

- Early Head Start & ECEAP Monthly Report: Jodi Wall, *Executive Director of Early Care & Education (ECE)*, shared highlights of the report. Additionally, Jodi shared that the Early Head Start renewal grant will be fully funded beginning in September for the next five years. They have also been awarded \$2 million in funding from the Department of Commerce for building upgrades. ECE will also pilot a therapeutic learning program for 3-5 year olds in partnership with Vancouver Public Schools.
- Superintendent's Report: Tim Merlino, *Superintendent*, briefed the board on the following:
 - New Superintendent Orientations: There are seven new superintendents in the new region this year serving Battle Ground, Klickitat, Naselle Grays-Valley, Skamania, Wahkiakum, Vancouver school districts and the Washington State School for the Blind. ESD Leadership is in the process of providing orientations for the new superintendents.
 - Program Funding Challenges: Marnie Allen, *Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Insurance Programs, and Legal Services*, provided an update on staffing reductions for ESD programs. The ESD has also added 106 positions in programs that are experiencing growth.
 - CSG Update: The ESD 112 Construction Services Group has added a number of new projects statewide including seismic work, noise mitigation, and rural projects.
 - Board Elections: Superintendent Merlino shared a list of board members whose terms will end this year and key dates for those planning to run for election.
- Employee Acknowledgments & Recognitions: Monique Dugaw, *Executive Director of Communications & Public Relations*, shared employee acknowledgements for Chris King, *Child Care Award Specialist*, and SELF and ESD 112 ECE Staff: Taylor Canham, Diana Jaramillo Pardo, LeighAnn Scott, Nancy Posadas-Mejia, Leslie Morehead, Ray Thorne, and Rachel Fox.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

- **Motion passed**: To approve the consent agenda items including minutes from the ESD 112 Board of Directors Business Meeting – June 24, 2025; Personnel Activity Report for June & July 2025; Expenditure Reports for June & July 2025; and EHS Expenditure Reports for June & July 2025.
- **Motion passed**: To approve Resolution R.25.01 – In the Matter of Approving Temporary Out of Endorsement Conditional Special Education Assignments.
- **Motion passed**: To approve Resolution R.25.02 – In the Matter of Approval of the Purchase of Real Property – Quest Academy.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Correspondence: 2024-25 Annual Report Child Care Aware; program from the Celebration of Life for Gay Selby; Letter of Achievement from OSPI and the Washington State Patrol; email from Anita Gahimer Crow, Mill A Board President; and a Certification of Appreciation presented to ESD 112 for sponsorship of the Lower Columbia School Safety Summit.
- Board Participation in Events: Heidi Rosenberg attended the ESD 112 Back to School Meeting on August 22, 2025.

CALENDAR

- ESD 112 Board of Directors Business Meeting – ESD 112 – September 23, 2025
- ESD 112 Board of Directors Business Meeting – ESD 112 – October 28, 2025
- ESD 112 Board of Directors Business Meeting – ESD 112 – November 25, 2025
- AESA Annual Conference – Colorado, Springs – December 3-5, 2025

- ESD 112 Board of Directors Business Meeting – Red Cross Building at Fort Vancouver – December 9, 2022

RETIREMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – LEANNE BREMER

President, Heidi Rosenberg, and Superintendent Tim Merlino thanked LeAnne Bremer for her many years of service to the community and over six years of service on the ESD 112 Board of Directors.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:41 pm.



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