APPROVED

# Enumclaw School District

# Minutes

## Board Work Study

District Office - Nancy A. Merrill Boardroom

**Date and Time**
Monday January 5, 2026 at 6:30 PM

**Directors Present**
Ben Stouffer, Paul Fisher, Scott Mason, Tara Cochran, Tyson Gamblin

**Directors Absent**
*None*

**Guests Present**
Shaun Carey, Stacey Whitten

### I. Opening Items

#### A. Call the Meeting to Order

Tyson Gamblin called a meeting of the board of directors of Enumclaw School District to order on Monday Jan 5, 2026 at 6:30 PM.

#### B. Roll Call

### II. WORK STUDY SESSION

#### A.

**School Presentation - Enumclaw High School**

Enumclaw High School Principal Dr. Rod Merrell introduced himself to the Board of Directors. Dr. Merrell shared that he would be presenting a "deeper dive" into the EHS School Improvement Plan that was submitted to the Board in December. He shared a EHS revised vision statement, *We empower every student to learn, grow, and thrive through meaningful relationships, rigorous learning, and purposeful pathways - so that they graduate with confidence, connection, and a clear plan for their future.*

Dr. Merrell stated that staff is focusing on three main priorities at the high school this year: (1) improve student attendance, (2) close the on time graduation gap rate for students receiving special education services, and (3) all students graduating on time with a plan and a pathway.

Dr. Merrell shared action steps for improving student attendance included strengthening tiered attendance monitoring and intervention systems, building a positive attendance culture, and addressing student barriers to attendance. Dr. Merrell shared attendance data with the board and steps being taken to follow up with students of concern. Some of these steps include the leadership team developing a model for attendance meetings with families and holding attendance focus group meetings with students of concern.

He shared action steps for closing the on time graduation rate opportunity gap for students receiving SPED services include improving the implementation and monitoring of IEPs, improving EHS staff members understanding of Special Education Law and staff responsibilities to support students receiving services, and redesigning the Independent Learning Classroom (ILC) program.

Action steps for students graduating with a diploma and a plan include developing and holding the first "Beyond the Hive" event, developing senior exit interviews, and fully implementing "School Links" on the High School and Beyond platform. For the "Beyond the Hive" event, parents were provided support for completing the FAFSA and WASFA, support on how to go through the college application process, introduced to "School Links", and information on earning college credit in the high school. Dinner and child care was provided for the families.

Dr. Merrell shared some of the EHS celebrations for the year with the Board of Directors. They included AVID summer institute training for 28 staff, the soft start for 9th graders, the AVID site team leading professional development (staff teaching staff), updated cell phone policy, implementation of the digital hall pass through Securly, the work of the Makerspace team, drama/music department collaboration, and school culture improvements. He stated that the building leadership team is functioning at a high level through distributed leadership.

Challenges faced at the high school include student attendance, staffing changes, student vaping, lack of access to alternative education settings for students, the Skyward to Qmlativ transition, student mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, students using social media with negative intent, and staff morale. He stated the demands on teachers can be overwhelming at times especially with student social and emotional needs being high.

Dr. Merrell thanked the Board of Directors for their time. The Board of Directors asked clarifying questions.

**B. EHS Makerspace Update**

EHS Principal Dr. Rod Merrell introduced benefactor Rosemary Dunkle to the Board. He shared the history of Ms. Dunkle's husband attending EHS and finding success in the CTE program. After the passing of Mr. Dunkle from cancer, Ms. Dunkle approached the school to make a contribution in his name to benefit high school students. Funds from this donation gave Enumclaw High School (EHS) staff members an opportunity to attend AVID training. Dr. Merrell recalled that the initial presentation to the Board of Directors also focused on building a new facility for makerspace activities. He shared that today's presentation would bring them up to date on the progress and findings of the makerspace planning team's research.

The team visited several schools with makerspaces to get ideas about what could be possible at EHS and shared photos of the spaces for the Board to view. They looked at various space options at EHS and were excited about the rooms 301, 302, and 303. They also met with EHS students who provided great feedback concerning makerspace options. Dr. Merrell shared the common purpose of the space(s), how the teams brainstormed, sorted, organized ideas and the spaces desired. Dr. Merrell stated that the plan to use current space at EHS are different than the original plan, but the team realized that building a facility would utilize all the donations funds without filling the space with makerspace equipment.

He asked the Board if they had any questions. The Board asked clarifying questions and thanked Dr. Merrell for the hard work on this project. The Board thanked Ms. Dunkle for her generous donation and for continuing to work with the EHS team.

**C. Board Governance Review**

Board President Gamblin shared that he wanted to review school board protocols as a group, discuss past practices and consider practices they might want to adjust. He shared OPMA reminders on the correct ways the Board can communicate through email and text. He discussed meeting attendance notifications , specifically the process of notifying the Board President if a Director will be absent from a meeting. Board President Gamblin will then share the information with the Superintendent and Executive Assistant.

Board President Gamblin also led discussions surrounding Board email responses to community members, the reading of the land acknowledgement at Board meetings, public statements in the media and responding to comments from community members who address the Board of Directors at a meeting. It was agreed that the practice of communication responses from the Board will continue to be the responsibility of the Board President. He asked the Directors if there were other questions or topics to discuss concerning Board processes.

A question was asked concerning adding items to the Board agenda. Another question was asked concerning Directors community presence and attending school events. All Board members were encouraged to email principals to schedule visit schools and attend a variety of events held in the district.

## III. BOARD PROCESS DEBRIEF

### A. Board Debrief

There was no debrief. Board President Gamblin shared there was a need for an Executive Session for 20 minutes to review a public employee. The regular meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. At 8:20 p.m. Board President Gamblin requested an additional 10 minutes for the executive session.

The regular meeting was called back into session at 8:22 p.m. There were no additional comments.

## IV. Closing Items

### A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacey Whitten