APPROVED

Enumclaw School District

Minutes

Board Study Session - Retreat

Date and Time
Wednesday October 14, 2026 at 8:00 AM

Location
Enumclaw Expo Center Field House

8:00 - 8:15 AM - Coffee and Pastries

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

Directors Absent
None

Guests Present
Mark Wenzel, 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 Wednesday Oct 14, 2026 at 8:20 AM.

B. Roll Call

II. 8:15 AM - Team Building/Book Review

A. Board Book Discussion

The morning session began with an opening reflection, during which board members shared stories of gratitude. Following the reflection, Superintendent Mark Wenzel reviewed the day's agenda and operating norms.

The Board divided into two working groups to review the first two chapters of the book, *Improving School Board Effectiveness.* The objective of the study was to identify key ideas that challenge existing thinking, reinforce beliefs, and provide insight into effective governance leadership. The Board regrouped to share and identify guiding principles based on core concepts from the book:

- Student Achievement
  - We value student achievement and prioritize it as a board goal.
  - We believe that every student can learn and should grow every year.
- Superintendent-Board Alignment
  - We believe alignment between the Board and the Superintendent is vital to develop expectations, create conditions for success, hold the system accountable, build collective will, and learn together as a team.
- Board Visibility
  - We believe the Board should be actively visible in the work and at schools to show support and hold ourselves accountable.
- Urgency
  - We value taking action every day as a Board to move closer to our goals and model urgency.

III. 9:30 AM - District Improvement Plan

A. District Cabinet Presentation

Superintendent Wenzel presented on the research and data informing the District Improvement Plan. The presentation outlined the Five Commitments aligned with current educational research for student success, which inform the district's strategic goals

Key priorities include progress monitoring, a commitment to PLCs, trust as a focus through relationships, listening, central office visibility, and community engagement through actively sharing and telling the district's story to the broader community.

Superintendent Wenzel detailed the district's Theory of Improvement which bridges strategies to student success through:

- District Office Partnership - Strategies used from the book, *From Tinkering to Transformation,* focuses on district office support to increase the bandwidth of principals, allowing them to serve more effectively as instructional leaders.
- Principal Leadership - Direction, alignment, and commitment to a clear vision with principal goals that focus on student success.

Director of Secondary Education Dr. Scott Tatum introduced a Board-Cabinet activity designed for team discussion and reflections regarding the district's approach to improvement. Cabinet members shared their specific strategic leadership to support to the district's improvement efforts.

Following the activity, Board and Cabinet members engaged in a joint discussion analyzing the direct alignment of how district goals connect to the five commitments. As part of the exercise, Board members selected specific strategies to evaluate and articulate the direct benefits to student outcomes. The Board reviewed a list of questions generated from the September Study Session's initial review of the District Improvement Plan. The Board evaluated whether past inquiries had been fully answered or if progress was actively moving toward a resolution, while identifying any remaining questions that require future clarification.

IV. 10:30 AM - Connection Activity and School Improvement Plans

A. Connection

B. School Improvement Plans

Superintendent Wenzel led attendees in a structured team connection activity. He then provided a debrief to the leadership team regarding the morning's session with the Board focusing on the book study and guiding principles drafted to align leadership across the district. Superintendent Wenzel reemphasized the alignment between the overarching district goals, Cabinet operations, the implementation of the District Improvement Plan, and School Improvement Plans.
Superintendent Wenzel commended building principals for their intensive work surrounding their respective School Improvement Plans (SIP).

Director of Elementary Education Lindsey Marquardt provided framing for the upcoming SIP presentations, encouraging the Board to listen specifically for strategic alignment between district-level goals and school-level goals, strategies, and commitments. Board members and Cabinet members rotated through presentations with building principals for each of the five goals. Discussions centered on school-specific strategies designed to improve performance in the following target areas:

- Math Outcomes
- English Language Arts (ELA) Outcomes

- Student Attendance Rates
- Graduation Rates
- Opening Evergreen Elementary School on Schedule and on Budget

Following the presentations, the Board and leadership team reconvened in individual groups to share feedback and reflections. Board members shared individual process observations:

- Student Representative Preston Bauer - Noted it was insightful, from a student perspective, to learn about the detailed, behind-the-scenes work of district administrators, specifically related to attendance.
- Director Gamblin - Shared a historical perspective on SIPs in the district, expressing appreciation for the clear goals and strong alignment, and specifically praised the shift to allow principals to function more effectively as instructional leaders.
- Director Fisher - Commended the staff for their great efforts, observing that teams across all presentations consistently utilized unified language such as commitment, sense of urgency, student success, excitement, and measurable goals. He noted that this consistency demonstrates the entire district is moving cohesively in the same direction.
- Director Cochran - Expressed gratitude and appreciation for the staff's hard work and their ability to become so well-equipped in a short period of time. She noted that building leaders exhibit strong confidence in the work and demonstrate a collective belief that students will learn at higher levels.
- Director Mason - Praised the progress at Evergreen Elementary, noting the project is on schedule and the detailed planning will serve as an excellent blueprint for future district capital projects. He highlighted the value of the project's community involvement and the incorporation of Black Diamond history.
- Director Stouffer - Offered appreciation to the administrators for their dedicated service, comparing their expertise to that of a skilled craftsman focused on cultivating and creating successful student learners.

V. 1:00 PM - Review Superintendent, Board Goals and Evaluation Process

A. Superintendent Goals

The Board and Superintendent Wenzel engaged in a collaborative activity on superintendent evaluation, utilizing the selected quotes from the book, *Improving School Board Effectiveness.*

The Board reviewed the Superintendent's proposed operational and leadership goals to ensure direct alignment with district priorities and establish a clear focus for the school year. Board members and Superintendent Wenzel discussed the specific goals and implementation strategies in detail. There were no edits or additions requested by the Board to the proposed goals.

B. Superintendent Evaluation Process

The Board and Superintendent agreed to a June 2026 evaluation of district goals, as state assessment data will be available. The Board aligned on individual ratings first followed by a discussion in executive session to determine final ratings. The Board and Superintendent will do a mid-year evaluation no later than February, per the Superintendent's contract.

C. Board Goals

To facilitate regular progress monitoring, the Board requested adding monthly data points to the Board agenda or Board communication. This will serve as a quick-glance resource to track results for goals such as student attendance.

The Board discussed directly aligning their goals to the district improvement goals. Discussion focused on governance actions that support student learning, increase board presence, visibility in schools and the community. A compiled list of goal ideas to be formally considered, refined, and scheduled for adoption at a future meeting are as follows:

- School site visits
- Community visibility
- Student achievement
- Governance excellence
- Professional development
- Review of the board's policy #1006-Board of Directors Operating Principles
- Creating an onboarding packet for future board members

VI. 2:45 PM - Board Debrief and End-of-Retreat Survey (Exit Ticket)

A. Survey

There were no additional comments. The Board members completed an exit ticket. All members rated the retreat as "highly valuable" in supporting the Board's governance role and building a coherent approach to strategic improvement.

VII. 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 3:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacey Whitten