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Olympia, WA 98504-7200



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

September 16, 2024

Marysville School Board of Directors
Zachary Robbins, Marysville School District Superintendent
Marysville School District
4220 80th Street NE
Marysville, WA 98270

Re: Appointment of Special Administrator

Dear Marysville School Board and Superintendent Robbins:

This letter is to notify you that pursuant to the recommendation of the Financial Oversight Committee (FOC), I am appointing Dr. Arthur Jarvis as a special administrator in accordance with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.315.221. Effective September 16, 2024, Dr. Jarvis will oversee and carry out the financial conditions imposed on the district between August 2023 when Marysville School District (MSD) was put on binding conditions to present.

The appointment of a special administrator is an unprecedented step for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to take, and Dr. Jarvis is well suited for this responsibility. He brings significant and relevant experience, including service as a school district superintendent and interim superintendent in seven districts across Washington state. His professional background, expertise, and leadership dispositions will prove to be valuable as MSD works with the FOC, OSPI, and Northwest Educational Service (NWESD) 189 to regain financial stability.

As the special administrator, Dr. Jarvis is authorized to direct changes to any and all business practices within the district. You will provide him with whatever documentation he requires in order to perform his duties of carrying out the conditions imposed on the district. Specifically, Dr. Jarvis' duties will include, but will not be limited to:

1. Reviewing and analyzing the district's annual operating budget.
2. Developing a detailed plan and process for implementation of financial conditions imposed on MSD.
3. Reviewing, approving, and setting limitations on MSD's authority to enter into contracts.

4. Reviewing, approving, and setting limitations on MSD's hiring and personnel actions.
5. If reasonably necessary to avoid filing a dissolution petition, liquidating, or disposing of fixed assets and contractual liabilities by any reasonable and documented method.
6. Reviewing and strengthening or developing financial and operational policies, procedures, and practices.
7. Reviewing and strengthening or developing compliance policies, procedures, and practices to ensure leadership (Board, Superintendent, Finance, etc.) and key constituents are appropriately involved in the review of financial reports, audits, financial compliance requirements, accountability, and conflicts of interest, and that succession processes and structures are in place that maintain compliance long-term.
8. Work in partnership with the OSPI Financial Oversight Committee.

Dr. Jarvis will require an office or touch-down work area and access to an MSD phone line located in a spot where sensitive conversations can be private. He will need a closed-door meeting space in the central service center. He is authorized to visit any school district location and conduct meetings with school district staff and constituents. Dr. Jarvis is not required to provide advance notice or visibility of communication or contact with school district personnel or constituents. Dr. Jarvis will honor collectively bargained provisions around engaging school district staff when applicable.

The Financial Oversight Committee received reports from constituents of possible retaliatory behavior, including specific concerns that school district staff are (or will) experience retaliation. This will be an item that Dr. Jarvis will investigate or refer for investigation to the appropriate venue. In the meantime, any materially adverse personnel action (including changes in terms and conditions, termination, or discipline) must be first discussed with Dr. Jarvis. No staff should be deterred or subject to reprisal for providing timely and accurate information to Dr. Jarvis. While I am confident it will not be necessary, I will issue amended binding conditions if I determine Dr. Jarvis' ability to carry out his responsibilities are being impeded.

In addition to the appointment of Dr. Jarvis as the special administrator as described above, the district will remain on enhanced financial oversight. This includes the following steps:

1. The FOC will continue to meet and be permitted to work with the special administrator and the school district to answer outstanding questions regarding the current MSD budget.
2. By October 15, 2024, MSD must submit a revised budget to OSPI. The budget should fully address all the questions from the FOC and establish a common understanding of the district's current financial position.
3. The FOC shall develop an alternative financial plan that returns the district to financial sustainability by the end of the 2025–26 school year. If proposed for adoption, the alternate plan would be subject to a public hearing.

The following restrictions also remain in place:

1. A district-wide hiring freeze of all non-certificated staff, with business-critical exemptions needing approval by the special administrator.
2. A freeze on all employee awards and incentives not currently outlined in collective bargaining agreements.
3. A freeze on all discretionary school building budgets (non-personnel costs).
4. Postponement of any planned curriculum adoption until the district exits binding conditions.
5. No new or renewal of contractual agreements with vendors more than \$25,000 without prior approval of the FOC or special administrator.
6. No new technology purchases.
7. No new stipends for administrative staff until the district exits binding conditions.
8. No state or local funded travel for administrative staff.
9. No state or local funded travel for school board members.
10. Class size overage expenditures for 2024–25 must not exceed the amount spent on this purpose for the 2023–24 school year.
11. Consultation with the Tulalip Tribes Board of Directors about the impacts of budget reductions, including the requirements listed in this letter.
12. Complete, accurate, and prompt responses to requests made by the special administrator.

In addition to these restrictions remaining in place, I am also requiring the following:

13. Any personnel actions leading to the removal of superintendent-appointed exempt-level employees at the district may not take place without the approval of the special administrator.

My office will be coordinating Dr. Jarvis' first site visit to occur later this month and anticipates holding a series of meetings with internal and external school district constituents, including a meeting open to the public.

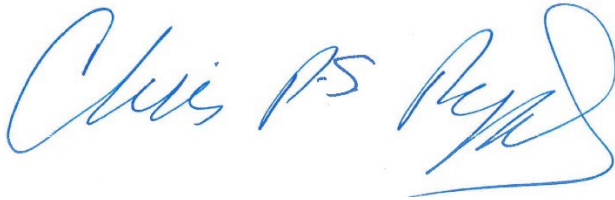
Should you have any questions between now and Dr. Jarvis' starting date, please contact T.J. Kelly, OSPI Chief Financial Officer, at thomas.kelly@k12.wa.us.

Marysville School Board of Directors and Superintendent Robbins

September 16, 2024

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Reykdal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" being the most prominent.

Chris Reykdal
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

cc: Ismael Vivanco, Superintendent, Northwest ESD 189
T.J. Kelly, Chief Financial Officer, OSPI
Ramon Alvarez, Chief Human Resources Officer, OSPI
Kassidy Probert, Assistant Superintendent, ESD 101
Lisa Matthews, Assistant Superintendent, NWESD 189