

MOSES LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

1620 S PIONEER WAY • MOSES LAKE, WA 98837 • WWW.MLSD161.ORG



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, August 18, 2021

For more information contact:

Claren McLaughlin // Marketing & PR Specialist

509.793.7734

cmclaughlin@mlsd161.org

Moses Lake School District Working Toward Key Leadership Change

Moses Lake, Washington– The Moses Lake School District Board of Directors and Dr. Joshua Meek are working on terms for a mutually-agreed separation of Dr. Meek’s superintendency with the District. Under the general principles of those terms, Dr. Meek’s separation would be effective on August 31, 2021. The School Board would accept this action as part of a Special Meeting to be held on Friday, August 20, 2021. It is expected at that time the Board would preliminarily discuss selection of a new Superintendent to serve the district. Both Dr. Meek and the Board of Directors are committed to pursuing an amicable separation.

Dr. Meek has served as the Superintendent of the Moses Lake School District since 2017 when he was unanimously appointed by the Board of Directors. Prior to that, Meek was the Assistant Superintendent (2015-2017), High School Principal (2009-2015), and High School Assistant Principal (2004-2009). Dr. Meek stated, “The Moses Lake School District has an incredible future for its students, staff, and community. This district has been a staple in my life for the past 18 years and I will miss it incredibly. Without a doubt what I will miss most are the people of this wonderful community. During my tenure as Superintendent, the district navigated unprecedented challenges and I was proud of the way the district and the community stepped up to the plate and tackled those challenges head-on. While change is never easy and brings with it a range of fears and emotions, as a leader, there is a time and place when you recognize that your work and leadership has reached the end in the current space. I am human and far from perfect. I do however walk away proudly from the work we have accomplished in the Moses Lake School District. I have had more than my share of rocky days, but I know with each of those I grew as a professional and person. Thank you for allowing me to walk on this journey with you, and I will always wish this community nothing but the best. I will continue to serve as a resource and mentor for several key district projects in Moses Lake as part of the agreement that we’re working on. Under it, I would be committed to a smooth transition for the future of the District and its students.”

School Board President Vickey Melcher stated, "A decision by the Board to work toward separating Dr. Meek from his superintendency was made knowing it would be best for the District as a whole at this time and under the circumstances. The Board recognizes that Dr. Meek has dedicated his time in the district to the goal to make sure all students reach their fullest potential. Dr. Meek has shown his willingness to think innovatively during unprecedented times to make decisions for the benefit of the district and community. His unconditional support of all staff has been a constant throughout his time with us. This Board, staff and community will owe Dr. Meek their gratitude for his professionalism and wish him well in his future. Under the terms of agreement being worked on, the Board would be committed to making this leadership change with the well-being of the community its highest priority."

Work on Dr. Meek's separation of employment was preceded by a series of audit reports recently provided to the School Board. These reports generated questions about the payment of special project stipends for all school principals, assistant principals, district office staff, and district lead administrators (including Dr. Meek) without prior Board approval; failure by Dr. Meek to timely provide receipts for his use of a District credit card for purchases he'd made for District-needed goods, supplies, and services; failure by him to comply with District policies governing timely reimbursement for personal purchases he'd made using that card; and perceived inaccuracies in Dr. Meek's reporting of personal leave time he'd taken. Dr. Meek has provided the Board his detailed written and verbal explanation of the circumstances of how these issues occurred, and at the same time he has owned that some of the questions prompted by the audit resulted from his own inattention to detail and poor judgment. For its part, the School Board's review of these matters has not found any intentional effort by Dr. Meek to inappropriately receive personal financial gain, but Dr. Meek and the Board believe it best to work toward a change of leadership that would involve payment to Dr. Meek of the severance amount required by the terms of his employment contract with the School District.

The Board of Directors have called a Special Meeting for 9:00 am on Friday, August 20, 2021, for the purpose of discussing the 2021-2022 operating budget and now to consider taking action on this leadership change. School Board Meetings are open to the public and are available to stream online at www.mlsd161.org.

###

About Moses Lake School District

Moses Lake School District serves over 8,300 students and employs over 1,100 people in the region. Comprised of one high school, one technical center, three middle schools, and eleven elementary schools, Moses Lake School District is committed to educational excellence. www.mlsd161.org