

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J  
1201 TEXAS AVENUE  
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 10, 2020

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A Regular Meeting of the of Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order virtually at 6:00 p.m. by Greg Kintz. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

**Board Present:** Greg Kintz, Jeana Gump, Susan Wagner, Stacey Pelster, and Joanie Jones. BOARD PRESENT

**Board Absent:** Brittanie Roberts and the vacant position. BOARD ABSENT

**Staff Present:** Aaron Miller, Superintendent; Nate Underwood, Middle and High School Principal; Michelle Eagleson, Elementary Principal; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Kendra Schlegel, Juliet Safier, Robin Manning and Rachel Brown, Licensed Staff; and Camrin Eyrrick, Richard Traver, Jana Titus, and Dana Hyde, Classified Staff. STAFF PRESENT

**Visitors Present:** Scott Laird VISITORS PRESENT

**1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**2.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** Remove Discussion item #7.2 - All Students Belong Policy. This will be reviewed by the Policy Committee and presented to the Board at next month's meeting. Consent Agenda item #10.1 has a typo -change to 11/12/20 minutes. Stacey Pelster moved to the approve the agenda as amended. Joanie Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. AGENDA REVIEW

**3.0 SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS:** Greg Kintz asked for Leadership students to attend future meetings to report on student activities. Mr. Underwood stated he would visit with Mrs. Ward. SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS

**Principal Reports:**

Nate Underwood reported:

PRINCIPAL REPORTS

- Parent conferences went well. Parents were able to schedule virtual conferences during the week of November 16-20.
- Staff Professional Development has been a combination of in-house training with staff sharing their areas of expertise with their colleagues as well as trainings linked to county, regional and state networking. Virtual meetings have not been as fun but the sharing of information has been valued.

Greg Kintz asked about the status of Student Body elections. Mr. Underwood explained that this normally happens in the Spring and last year this did not happen due to a lack of participation. There is a current President however the Leadership class did not fit into the regular schedule this year so it is being offered as a club that occurs every other Wednesday. Student activity participation is not high. Mr. Underwood shared that he did send out a survey to poll the students and many said that due to the amount of virtual school work they didn't have time for activities. Trying to do everything virtually is challenging.

First quarter grades showed a high percentage of students receiving at least one D grade. Many Districts around the State are experiencing the same challenges. Working to get students on track is the goal. Staff are working very hard to continue to reach out and connect with students. The SEL team is doing home visits. Home visits and phone calls to students don't just focus on grades. The message is being conveyed that the students are missed and cared about. Staff are not giving up. Next week staff will do one on one time with students and conduct empathy interviews. The data obtained from these interviews will drive interventions.

Joanie Jones commented that she has attended parent virtual meetings. Parents are concerned about students having trouble turning in assignments. Are responses being given to parents and is this

getting ironed out? Do the teachers feel as though the kids are getting it? Mr. Underwood explained that parents who reach out to him are responded to. Teachers are going over the norms on where and how to submit assignments regularly. They continue to remind students of the protocols.

Susan Wagner asked if parents are being provided with positive messaging and suggestions on how to engage their children in a positive way. According to Mr. Underwood, yes, during advisory classes, the social emotional and human side of things is discussed. These conversations are happening with students at this time. Aaron Miller shared that any time communication goes out from him, he tries to form it in a positive light. The District is currently working on a manual for parents that will help with their questions.

Michelle Eagleson highlighted her report:

- Conferences were successful with 86% attendance at the elementary level. Teachers did a great job of adjusting to meet time availability of parents.
- Journey's Professional Development will be put off until the Fall of 2021 when students are present and on site.
- K-5 Community Chats continue to occur. She has had many weekly conversations with parents. She continues to receive positive feedback with appreciation for all the work the staff and the District are putting forth to make this crazy year go a little smoother.
- Staff are focusing on how to engage students in a virtual setting. They want kids to start driving their own learning and have implemented multiple new strategies. One of which is the creation of Breakout Rooms. The kids are really liking these and are handling themselves appropriately when staff is not present. Staff continues to try and learn new things.

**4.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** None

PUBLIC COMMENT

**5.0 BUSINESS REPORTS:**

**5.1 Superintendent Report:** Aaron Miller updated the Board on the following:

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- Curl Transportation Revision: After checking with legal counsel, removing wording does not take away any power of the District. A revision will be presented next month for review and approval.
- Policy Updates: The committee was asked to complete review of the latest update packets by December 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Students in Classroom: The County numbers needs to be below 100 cases per 100,000 residents in Columbia County before we can have kids on site. Currently the numbers are going up, not down. The latest numbers from the County are being posted to the District's website.
- Staff / Administrative Staff are all having a tough time as well as students. Their grades are reflecting this. Staff are working really hard to connect with kids that aren't engaging. The work that district staff have been doing has been pleasant to watch and see. We all want to get back to what is normal.
- The Budget process for next year has started. Student enrollment numbers are being looked at.
- Administration is currently discussing whether or not the District will have "snow days" this year if they occur. How these days of inclement weather will be addressed is being considered.
- The District / Justin Benassi, woodshop teacher, recently received an award from PACE for his work with this students and safety within the woodshop program.

BOND PROJECTS UPDATE

Bond Update: Projects are wrapping up and invoices and bills are being paid. This will provide the District with final numbers. The Art Room is finished with the final walk through occurring at the end of this week or the first of next week. As soon as this happens the District will apply to the City for final occupancy.

**5.2 Financial Report:** Marie Knight shared that, after forecasting the decrease in our enrollment, the ending fund balance is close to what it was last month. K-12 ADM was

FINANCIAL REPORT

holding at 527 students but we lost a few more students this week. There were no questions from the board.

- 5.3 Maintenance Report:** Mark Brown's report was reviewed by the Board. Joanie Jones inquired about the general maintenance at Mist such as burglar and smoke alarm batteries as well as double checking the light and the electrical outlet in the pump house. MAINTENANCE REPORT
- 6.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:** Barb Carr reported that during the established timeline for accepting applications for the vacancy on the Board, no applications were received. One application did however arrive after the vacancy posting closed. The Board discussed opening the vacancy again. The next scheduled OSBA training is on Saturday Jan. 30, 2021. If the Board appoints at the January meeting this would still allow the new member of the Board to attend the OSBA training. BOARD REPORTS & BOARD DEVELOPMENT  
VACANCY APPLICATION TIMELINE
- Stacey Pelster moved to approve an extension to the open application period to January 4, 2021. Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. EXTENSION APPROVED
- 7.0 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION**
- 7.1 Policy Approval – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** These policies were presented last month as a first reading and are on the agenda for approval. POLICY UPDATES
- 7.2 All Students Belong Policy:** This item was removed during the agenda review.
- 7.2 Licensed Renewal / Non-Renewal Procedural Changes:** Mr. Miller recently forwarded an email to the Board from Spencer Lewis at OSBA about adjusting the process the District uses for licensed staff contract renewal. At the February Board meeting, Administration will present their recommendations for contract renewal / non-renewal. If the Board has questions and wishes to discuss the decision of the Administration, this will take place at the March meeting. The staff member in question will have the opportunity to be present for any discussion if they wish. The Board is required to take action annually on licensed staff contract extensions by March 15<sup>th</sup>. LICENSED STAFF CONTRACT RENEWAL PROCEDURES CHANGED
- Juliet Safier asked for clarification that the staff member would be present for the discussion only if the Board wishes to discuss the decision. Mr. Miller stated yes.
- 7.3 PERS Retirees – Work Back Requests:** Aaron Miller shared that last year the legislature made a change that would enable PERS retired staff to work back. Previously there was a limit on the number of hours a retiree could work. This hour limit has been removed. A couple of our staff inquired about this last year, however there was not language in policy available allowing the District to move forward. There is now a draft policy that OSBA has provided language for. This will be reviewed by the Policy Committee and presented next month to the Board as a first reading. PERS RETIREES WORK BACK REQUESTS DISCUSSED
- 7.4 School Re-Opening Update:** Aaron Miller shared the current date that the District is looking at returning students in grades K-2 to the classroom is January 11, 2021. Unfortunately Columbia County numbers are nowhere where they need to be at this time. The numbers may not allow the reopen target date to happen. Staff are working hard and preparing for the January 11<sup>th</sup> return to the classroom. Teachers of students in grades 3-5 are working on their plan as is teachers of middle and high school students. All reopening plans involve taking the District's Operational Blueprints and determining how we address safety and learning issues by adding detail where needed. Next week Mr. Miller will walk through the building with Elementary Principal Michelle Eagleson to make sure the elementary school will be ready to go. SCHOOL REOPENING UPDATE

Mist Elementary is considered a rural school and their entire school, grades K-5, would be able to go back on January 11<sup>th</sup> if numbers allow.

Class Sizes: Most parents at the elementary level will send their kids back to the classroom

when we can open. Classroom numbers will be close to 20, which means students can be accommodated in one classroom. Any classroom with over 20 students will need to be split. A plan will be in place for those parents that choose to continue to keep their child (ren) at home for distance learning.

Joanie Jones asked if Vernonia Schools can't be considered rural, the same as Mist? Unfortunately no, Vernonia is considered part of the County numbers. Also over 10% of our staff live in neighboring counties, such as Washington and Multnomah County. Columbia County Health looks at our blueprints and gives approval as well as governs and guides the District in the work required for tracing and quarantines, etc. if we have a staff member that shows symptoms.

Jeana Gump asked if infection numbers are being monitored at schools where students are attending in person. Is the spread of the virus happening at school? Mr. Miller stated that yes, ODE is looking at this and following those schools that reopen. In Douglas County, a District reopened and did not follow the guidelines they were supposed to adhere to and had major viral spread. Mr. Miller further went on to share that he spoke with the Superintendent of Sisters School District last week and they have made things work. They have had cases of the virus but none that have been identified as spread or traced to the school.

**8.0 ACTION ITEMS**

**8.1 Policy Approval:** Susan Wagner moved to approve the policy updates as presented (GBL, GBLA, GBN-JBA, and GCBDAAGDBDAA). Joanie Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. POLICIES APPROVED

**9.0 MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE:** Greg Kintz shared with the Board that he has access for one year to all the on-line materials shared at the recently held virtual OSBA convention. As a Board member, if you'd like access to any of the material, let him know. MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE

**11.0 CONSENT AGENDA:**

**11.1 Minutes of 11/12/2020 Regular Meeting** MINUTES APPROVED

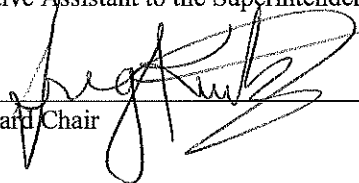
Joanie Jones moved to approve the consent agenda as amended (see Agenda Review). Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED

**Other Issues:** Next meeting will be held Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. OTHER ISSUES:

Greg Kintz shared that six of our Board positions will be up for election next Spring. He encouraged the Board to consider their reasons for serving as a member of the school board and be thinking about seeking another term.

**12.0 MEETING ADJOURNED** at 7:27 p.m. ADJOURNED

Submitted by Barb Carr,  
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Directors

  
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Board Chair

  
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District Clerk