

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J
1201 TEXAS AVENUE
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 12, 2021

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A Regular Meeting of the of Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 6:09 p.m. by Stacey Pelster. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Board Present:** Stacey Pelster, Greg Kintz, Javoss McGuire, Amy Cieloha, and Joanie Jones. Susan Wagner was present via telephone (#86). BOARD PRESENT
- Board Absent:** Vacant Position #7 BOARD ABSENT
- Staff Present:** Aaron Miller, Superintendent; Nate Underwood, MS/HS Principal; Michelle Eagleson, Elem. Principal; Rachel Wilson, K-12 Vice Principal; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Justin Benassi, Rachel Brown, Teresa Gore, Robin Manning, Juliet Safier, Kendra Schlegel, Dylan Taylor, and Claire Youngberg, Licensed staff; Stacy Adams, Katreasa Brown, Camrin Eyrrick, Beth Kintz, Karen Roberts, Jana Titus and Richard Traver Classified Staff. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors Present:** Sharlena Roberts-Oviatt, Shelley Hennessy, Scott Laird, Allison McLeod, Pamela Blankenship, Donna Webb, and phone numbers ending in 41 and 77. VISITORS PRESENT
- 1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 2.0 OATH of OFFICE:** Aaron Miller administered the Oath of Office to Joanie Jones, elected in May. Joanie was not in attendance at the July Meeting. OATH of OFFICE ADMINISTERED
- 3.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** The following items were amended on the agenda. Remove Discussion item #8.3 and corresponding Action item #9.4. AGENDA REVIEW
- It was noted that the Ready Schools, Safe Learners (RSSL) framework of 2021-22 is an item on the agenda so will not be eligible for comments during the public comment portion at the beginning of the meeting. Comments will be taken during that discussion time on the agenda. Aaron Miller shared that the RSSL guidance is coming from the State, and whether an individual agrees or disagrees, it all has an impact on school. The District is working to educate kids and Mr. Miller further asked that anyone with an opinion that could put roadblocks in front our kids, to please take your concerns to Salem.
- Greg Kintz moved to approve the agenda as amended. Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- 4.0 SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS:** SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS
- 4.1 English Language Learner (ELL) State Report:**
Kendra Schlegel reviewed a summary of progress report for the 2019-20 school year for the State of Oregon. She reviewed the four different level groups of learners and shared the percentages of students around the State at each level. There are 160 different languages recognized across the State of Oregon, the majority of students are of Spanish speaking families. There is no data to share from 2020-21. E.L.L. STATE REPORT SHARED
- 5.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** None PUBLIC COMMENT
- 6.0 BUSINESS REPORTS:**

6.1 Superintendent Report:

SUPERINTENDENT
REPORT

- Please contact Barb Carr to schedule monthly Board Member / Supt. meetings.
- Communication through emails – acknowledgement and responding back. Please respond to emails – there is still negotiation work to be conducted with Administration and Confidential/Supervisory groups as well as the Superintendent.
- Summer School – MS/HS credit recovery is currently underway. There was a session for elementary prior to July and another elem. session coming up at the end of Aug.
- Staff: custodial resignations – Randy Phipps and Corbin Nelson have resigned. New hires will be shared next month.
- ODE has shared with the District that all requirements for OSCIM grant (State matching construction grant) were submitted and the District has met all the requirements for the matching program. This grant is done and complete.
- Strategic Planning Process – plans are being finalized and meetings will be set in the next week or so.

6.2 Financial Report: Marie Knight shared that there is not a report this month. It is too early in the fiscal year.

FINANCIAL REPORT

6.3 Maintenance Report: Mark Brown’s report was reviewed by the Board. There were no questions.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

7.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:

7.1 Board Vacancy Discussion and Appointment: The Board received three applications for the vacancy on the board – position #7. Thomas Miller, Scott Rickard, and Brittanie Roberts.

BOARD VACANCY
DISCUSSED and
RICKARD APPOINTED

The candidates were asked to explain why they have submitted their name for consideration followed by a selection of random questions from various Board members. Questions asked of the three included:

1. How they see the community and the Board working together?
2. What other ways are you involved in our community?
3. What are your thoughts on how much time you’ll be investing as a Board member?

At the conclusion of the interview questions nominations for appointment were opened. Susan Wagner nominated Scott Rickard. Greg Kintz seconded the nomination. Amy Cieloha nominated Brittanie Roberts. Greg Kintz seconded the nomination. Joanie Jones nominated Tom Miller. Javoss McGuire seconded the nomination.

A vote by roll call was taken.

- Joan Jones cast a vote for Tom Miller
- Greg Kintz cast a vote for Scott Rickard
- Amy Cieloha cast a vote for Brittanie Roberts
- Susan Wagner cast a vote for Scott Rickard
- Javoss McGuire cast a vote for Scott Rickard
- Stacey Pelster cast a vote for Scott Rickard

Motion for Scott Rickard to be appointed to the vacant board position passed with 4 votes.

7.1.1 Oath of Office: Aaron Miller administered the Oath of Office to Scott Rickard.

OATH of OFFICE

7.2 Scholarship Development Committee. A lottery was held due to more than three board members expressing interest in this committee. Javoss McGuire, Greg Kintz and Scott Rickard will serve on this committee.

7.3 DEMSP Training – Half Session: After reviewing the Doodle Poll on date availability, it was determined that Saturday, Sept. 11th as choice #1 and Saturday, Sept. 18th as choice #2. Barb Carr will contact OSBA to get this scheduled. Further discussion was held in regards to in-person or a virtual meeting. It was noted that it would save the District travel funds if we are able to hold meetings virtually, but the consensus of all was to hold it in person if possible.

DEMSP TRAINING
DISCUSSED and DATE
OPTIONS DETERMINED

7.4 Board/School Committee Options and Assignments. Committee assignments for 2021-22 were reviewed and finalized. Board members will serve on the following committees:

- **Talented & Gifted (TAG)** – Susan Wagner, Greg Kintz, and Scott Rickard
- **CCC/SEL** – no volunteers
- **Safety** – Susan Wagner and Joanie Jones
- **Negotiations:** Stacey Pelster, Susan Wagner, and Javoss McGuire
- **Policy:** Greg Kintz and Amy Cieloha
- **Facilities:** Stacey Pelster, Susan Wagner, and Javoss McGuire
- **VEF:** Stacey Pelster
- **Board Scholarship:** Greg Kintz, Javoss McGuire, and Scott Rickard
- **Curriculum:** Joanie Jones and Javoss McGuire
- **Equity Team:** Susan Wagner and Amy Cieloha

BOARD and DISTRICT
COMMITTEE
PARTICIPATION FOR
2021-22

The question of whether or not community members are able to join committees was raised. It depends on the committee, some have community members participate and some don't. If someone has interest, please let Aaron Miller know and he will connect you with the committee chair.

7.5 Board Meetings – Virtual vs. In-Person Discussion: Stacey Pelster wanted to allow the board the opportunity to discuss board meetings held in-person or virtually. Javoss McGuire asked Aaron Miller about State guidance. Mr. Miller said it is allowable to have visitors in the building at this point. Changes are a distinct possibility but for now it is allowed.

IN-PERSON VS.
VIRTUAL BOARD
MEETING ACCESS
DISCUSSED

The consensus of the Board was to hold meetings in person and allow the community back in the building to attend their meetings. It was noted by members of the Board to allow this to the extent possible, following the State guidance and without putting the District at any risk for fines.

It was noted that tentatively, the September board meeting will be open for the public to attend. The virtual option will remain as well.

7.6 Evening Board Workshop/Dinner/School Tour: Aaron Miller shared that he is working to create opportunities where the board can do work as well as spend time getting to know each other. Date options were discussed and Barb Carr was asked to send out a Doodle Poll for the first three weeks of September in the evenings to assist in setting a date to have dinner and get an update and a tour of our facilities.

EVENING WORKSHOP /
DINNER / SCHOOL
TOUR FOR BOARD
DISCUSSED

7.7 District Priorities: Aaron Miller shared that during the DEMSP training the Board participated in, they were tasked with setting District Priorities. Part of that work includes formally adopting the Priorities. They are being presented tonight for adoption so Mr. Miller can move forward with utilizing them in the Strategic Planning process.

DISTRICT PRIORITIES
REVIEWED

Susan Wagner commented she was not given enough time to review them adequately. Stacey Pelster felt the three priorities come with a lot of work and questioned if this work can be accomplished feasibly. Perhaps it would be better to focus on just one or two.

Aaron Miller shared that the priorities are the result of the six meetings the board had working with the Leadership Team. The priorities are very broad and overarching. This is a living document that gives an understanding of the direction the Board wants the District to head.

Greg Kintz shared that these are things we should be doing all time, they are guide posts and markers to go forward. Joanie Jones stated these priorities go full circle and go hand in hand with each other.

7.8 Board Calendar Adjustment: The Board meeting calendar for 2021-22 adopted in July has the Board meeting date in November on the 11th which is Veterans' Day and a District holiday. This was an oversight. Discussion was held on an alternate date. After discussion it was the consensus of the Board to change the November meeting to Tuesday, November 9th.

BOARD MEETING
CALENDAR
ADJUSTMENT
DISCUSSED

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION

8.1 VEA Collective Bargaining Agreement: Aaron Miller shared the agreement between the District and teachers union, Vernonia Education Foundation (VEA). This two-year agreement is the product of the teachers' negotiation team and the Board negotiation team. The District team is recommending ratification. VEA is recommending ratification as well.

VEA TWO-YEAR CONTRACT SHARED

8.2 Policy Updates / Second Reading: Aaron Miller shared that the policy updates were provided last month for a first reading. The Board has the opportunity to comment on any recommended changes during the month and then they are brought to the next meeting for a second reading and approval. All changes come from the OSBA legal department.

POLICY UPDATES PRESENTED FOR 2nd READING

Amy Cieloha shared that she felt the regularity of reciting the pledge should be more than once a week as stated in the policy. Aaron Miller indicated that the once a week time frame is a minimum and at the Elementary level students recite it every day. At the MS/HS level it is recited in Advisory classes and he is not sure how often students have Advisory each week.

8.3 New Hires: Removed from the agenda during agenda review.

NEW HIRES

8.4 Updated ODE/RSSL Guidance: Prior to the Board beginning their discussion public comment was taken.

OREGON DEPT. of EDUCATION "READY SCHOOLS, SAFE LEARNERS GUIDANCE" REVIEWED

- Allison McLeod read a statement that masks are a lie and she does not want to see masks in the school.
- Pamela Blankenship inquired how often students will be given a break from wearing the masks? She also asked if 7th grade students will have access to lockers. Aaron Miller stated that breaks would be outside recess, eating lunch, or the teacher could take kids out and take a mask break. Yes, to lockers.
- Scott Laird shared that he appreciates Supt. Miller's comments at the beginning at meeting regarding this topic.

Aaron Miller reviewed the RSSL document. Highlights from the document are as follows:

- Masks are required indoors in a school setting.
- There is room for some local decision making in regards to mask wearing before and after school, for athletics, and inside/outside activities during school hours and after school hours.
- Sanctions against the District and individuals can occur in those districts or with individuals that go against the State guidelines. Mr. Miller stated his Superintendent's license would be at risk. Board members take the Oath of Office which states they will uphold the laws of the State of Oregon.

GOVERNOR'S MASK MANDATE DISCUSSED AT LENGTH

Administration has made the decision that students will be required to have face coverings on when they come into the building. This was enforced today for all staff. All staff in contact with students over the summer have worn masks the entire time.

The plan is masks are to be worn **inside** before, during and after school hours at all times. The only exception to this is when singing or playing a musical instrument. Masks are optional **outside** before, during, and after the school day. This is all subject to change and will be revisited if we have COVID virus transmission or spread at school.

Athletics are the exception: **Inside**, volleyball athletes during competition can go without a mask but athletes on the bench, patrons, visitors and fans must wear mask. **Outside**, athletes and patrons do not have to wear a mask. Again, this is subject to change.

Aaron Miller stated that the District doesn't want to be part of the problem, we want to continue to have students on site, in the classroom, and on the courts/ball fields. The procedures we had in place last year worked. We did not have any spread at school.

Community and Board members felt pushing back to the Governor in support of having local

control in these decisions is important. Not saying anything is perceived as consenting to the mandate.

Stacey Pelster stated that unfortunately the hands of the Board and Supt. Miller are tied. She shared the violation and ramifications for non-compliance with the Governor's mask mandate. She further stated that she supports the decisions of Supt. Miller but she would like the Board to send a letter to the Governor expressing their disagreement with the rulings. She also encouraged community members to reach out to local elected officials.

Comments were made on mask exemptions connected to other federal laws/acts such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. Aaron Miller shared that a student's IEP would need to reflect that a student is unable to wear a mask due to their disability. It is an involved process to determine that wearing a mask is a barrier to a student's learning.

Scott Rickard commented that visiting with the District's legal counsel to get their input on the application of these types of laws as they relate to the ability of the school to require people in these circumstances to wear masks might be beneficial. Having the options available will be important when parents start asking. Aaron Miller explained that the District's legal counsel we are required to pay for their time, however the Board has the use of OSBA's PACE preloss counsel which is free advice to School Boards.

The only exceptions Supt. Miller sees at this time is mandates regarding mask wearing outdoors. Pushing back on local control, he feels, would be the most effective if a mandate comes down about students in the building. We have a small community with a small number of students, and this could be an argument for having students on campus if a mandate for distance learning returns. Unfortunately, with the mask mandate being across the state, he doesn't feel the Board would have much success in pushing back with this mandate.

The Board discussed drafting a collective letter to send to the Governor. Javoss McGuire stated he felt writing a letter would be a matter of record. Amy Cieloha said it is important to be heard even if nothing changes. Scott Rickard shared that an appropriate document that shows concrete harm sent to the right person at the State, can't hurt. We need to be careful of content and make sure that we need to say what it is we want to accomplish and to be strategic with the content and message as well as who it goes to. Greg Kintz was in support of sending a message however he wants to be careful to not make demands or step away from following the law. He will not support breaking the law.

BOARD TO CREATE A
DRAFT LETTER OF
RESPONSE TO
GOVERNOR BROWN'S
MASK MANDATE

Stacey Pelster asked Barb Carr what is the best way to go about this. Barb explained that any letter being sent by the School Board needs to be discussed and approved by the Board in a public meeting. Discussion or email dialogue by the Board can't happen outside of a public meeting or public meeting law would be broken. Barb also shared that getting no more than 3 members together to put a draft together would be okay as a quorum of the Board is 4 members. The draft letter could be presented at the next Board meeting for discussion and approval by the full board. It was decided that Stacey Pelster, Javoss McGuire and Scott Rickard would work together to put a draft letter together and share for discussion at the September Board meeting.

9.0 ACTION ITEMS


9.1 VEA Collective Bargaining Agreement: Greg Kintz moved to approve the 2021-23 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the VEA. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Scott Rickard abstained. Motion passed.

2021-23 VEA
AGREEMENT
APPROVED

9.2 Policy Update: Amy Cieloha moved to approve the updates to the presented policies. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Scott Rickard abstained. Motion passed.

POLICY UPDATES
APPROVED

- 9.3 **Adopt District Priorities:** Joanie Jones moved to adopt the District Priorities as presented. Greg Kintz seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Scott Rickard abstained. Motion passed. DISTRICT PRIORITIES ADOPTED
- 9.4 **New Hires:** Removed from agenda during Agenda Review.
- 9.5 **Board Meeting Calendar Adjustment:** Amy Cieloha moved to approve the adjustment to the 2021-22 Board Meeting Calendar moving the November meeting to the 9th. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. BOARD MTG CALENDAR ADJUSTED
- 10.0 **MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE:** Nothing discussed. MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE
- 11.0 **CONSENT AGENDA:**
 12.1 Minutes of 07/08/21 Regular Meeting CONSENT AGENDA MINUTES APPROVED
- Javoss McGuire moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Joanie Jones seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Scott Rickard abstained. Motion passed. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED
- Other Issues:** Greg Kintz shared the OSBA regional meetings that historically have been held in the Fall, this year will be split up into 18 separate meetings with 8 being held in the Fall and 10 in the Spring. Our regional meeting will be in the Spring. Greg will let the Board know when and where. Also, the annual convention in November will be held in Salem not in Portland. OTHER ISSUES: OSBA UPDATE
- 12.0 **MEETING ADJOURNED** at 9:10 p.m. ADJOURNED
 Submitted by Barb Carr,
 Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Directors



 Board Chair



 District Clerk