

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J
1201 TEXAS AVENUE
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORKSHOP MINUTES

September 11, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: A Workshop of the Board of Directors of Vernonia School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 9:03 a.m. virtually.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Board Present: Stacey Pelster, Amy Cieloha, Javoss McGuire, Scott Rickard, Greg Kintz, Susan Wagner and Joanie Jones.

BOARD PRESENT

Board Absent: None.

BOARD ABSENT

Staff Present: Aaron Miller, Superintendent and Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant

STAFF PRESENT

Visitors Present: Steve Kelley, OSBA.

VISITORS

Introductions were made. To strengthen Board relations and governance, Board members shared what they do during their day job. Collaborative Governance is a definition used at OSBA for a few years and is based on national research.

DEMSP TRAINING SESSION #1 – SHORT PROGRAM

Effective Partnership comes in 3 layers. 1) Board / Superintendent partnership, 2) Board to Board partnership, and 3) Board / Superintendent partnership with the community - this is the hardest of all 3 partnerships, especially during these times.

The Board completed the DEMSP Scholarship Long Program, last year. This is the short program, a continuation of the initial program. The program is 12 hours long with four sessions at 3 hours each. The focus of the short program is student achievement. Requirements for the program is a Board project. After reviewing the Board Self-Assessment, create Board goals, and evaluate the Superintendent. At the end of the short program \$2500 will be received for scholarships.

1stSession: Overview / Planning

2nd Session: Review the Self-Assessment Results

3rd and 4th Session: Work on your project by working with District Leadership Team on monitoring District priorities.

District Monitoring Plan (devised from the work at last year's large session). Role of the Board to set overall direction of District and then it is up to the Superintendent and his team to operationalize it.

Focus Area#1 – Improve Academic Proficiency Levels for all Students.

Focus Area #2 – Innovative Career Pathways

Focus Area #3 – Inclusive/Equitable Programs and Opportunities

The Board doesn't micromanage. Periodically (3 times a year) they will sit down with the Superintendent and District Leadership Team and look at data identified. Get together, give a data presentation about 1st key area, sit with one or two board members in groups (4 or 5 small groups with cross section – teachers, classified, community) talk about and understand the data. Gain understanding about what is needed in the classroom, what is needed to meet the challenges of what they face, and hold accountability at the same time.

A question was asked if the priorities change after data is reviewed. The focus areas don't generally change as they are broad enough areas. What will change is the data that the Board will look at. The Strategic Plan will change as needed.

This process is a great way to get Board input but also is what rallies the Board. The District focus has not changed, it's always been these areas, it is now being talked about and everyone is on the same page. Coming together with leaders and actually getting them written down has been a good exercise.

Aaron Miller commented that when the Board takes this on as their role it adds a different level of accountability. It is important that the Board see the real day to day implementation which is valuable on both sides. This is not necessarily a new focus area for the District but what is new is the involvement of the Board in the monitoring process.

09-11-2021

According to Steve Kelley, the monitoring plan is something that will happen later in the year. He is hoping to be able to hold session #3 and #4 in person and meet face to face.

Steve Kelley shared that OSBA is at the tail end of getting an updated Board Self-Assessment System. The instrument has changed from what was used last year and there is a greater thread of equity throughout. It should be available next month. Steve will communicate with Stacey Pelster when it is ready. Board members will be asked to respond electronically to assessment questions. This will need to be done timely so Steve can compile the results and be ready for discussion at Session #2.

Review of the proposed Goals for 2020-21.

1. The Vernonia School Board will continue to set and communicate high expectations for student learning with clear goals and plans for meeting those expectations.
2. The Vernonia School Board will continue to hold the School District accountable for meeting student learning expectations.
3. The Vernonia School Board will continue to evaluate the Superintendent on clear and focused expectations.

Stacey Pelster updated Steve on where the Board is with the Superintendent Evaluation. The evaluation happened and they have visited with Superintendent Miller. They currently need to reschedule the negotiation meeting for his contract. The Board asked the Superintendent to bring 1 or 2 goals to the next Board meeting. They will need to adopt the standards again and the goals and then develop the timeline for his next evaluation. Aaron Miller proposed that he come up with 2 personal goals and the Board provide direction on one goal.

Discussion was held on what Steve Kelley titled, "Can You vs Should You". Examples included:

- 4 or more Board members can be together at a social event/sporting game. You're not doing board work and/or having conversations about board work. Avoid being together at these events. When at conventions avoid conversations about District business and gathering together outside of the sessions.
- Outside of board meetings can Board members get together with less than a quorum? Yes, you can. Should you -- no. If 3 board members get together and then one goes on to talk to another at a different time, this would be a serial meeting and illegal. Social media context over different days could be construed as illegal meetings. Recommends all Board business be at the Board table when all are present. It can be hard to have some conversations in public but this is the spirit of public meeting law.
- Can two Board members have a conversation over the phone? Again, yes but should you, no. By doing so you are making a decision to not include the other Board members. What is the purpose of conversation if other board members are left out? Again if you talk with Board member A today, Board member B the next day and Board member C the following day, you've created a serial meeting. Steve Kelley coaches Boards to always remember the spirit of the law and have all conversations in public so people can observe.

Discussion was held on committees of the Board. If a sub-committee is created and they report to the Board the committee is subject to public meeting law, notice, meeting minutes, etc.

Negotiations with unions should have 1 or 2 Board members sit on the committee. The unions will decide if the meetings are to be held in public or private. If open and in public the meetings must be noticed. Reporting back to the Board occurs in an executive session. All other contracts must be done in public meetings.

Steve Kelley strongly suggests the Superintendent negotiate contracts with Administration and Confidential/Supervisory groups. This is Superintendent work. Eventually this gets presented to the Board in a public meeting.

The Superintendent contract is to be presented in public open sessions. Conversations can occur prior between the Superintendent and the Board Chair but the whole contract comes to the Board at a public meeting. When the contract comes back to the Board is it open for discussion, yes, but should you? Not necessarily -- you have charged the sub-committee with the work and don't want to substitute your judgement for theirs.

Public Meeting laws and state statute in the Attorney General's manual clearly has language regarding interpretation of the law. Questions -- feel free to reach out to Steve Kelly at any time.

Official policy sub-committee – notice the meeting, get together and talk or disband the Board sub-committee, and ask the Superintendent to review policy and bring to the Board. Or list the committee as the Superintendent’s advisory committee – not a Board committee. In a public meeting announce that if any Board members have interest in serving on an advisory committee to the Superintendent to contact the Superintendent. Don’t pick or select the committees in a public meeting. By doing so the Board is sanctioning it by unanimous consent which is almost the same as taking a vote. The Superintendent can then announce at the next meeting who is on his advisory committee.

A brief discussion was held on conversations between the outgoing and an incoming board chair to aid in the transition and transferring of knowledge. Steve Kelley suggested sharing immediately with the whole board. Hold an executive session to share.

Transition Planning – General considerations. Executive Search Calendar.

1. Declare the vacancy – effective July 1st (generally). Best time to advertise is November – January.
2. Approve the process, timeline etc. in meeting
3. Qualities and Qualifications – conduct an online survey, leaving open for two weeks. If using OSBA to assist in the Superintendent search, he would then compile the results of the survey and present to the Board. Generally questions asked would be: What are strengths of the community? What are the challenges of the community? What are you looking for in a Superintendent? The Board is required to obtain public comment on the Qualities and Qualifications list. Once this list is approved in public session, the Board can go into executive session to continue the process.
4. After applications start arriving a screening committee will be selected in public to work alongside the Board. The screening committee will receive training. Candidates will be revealed in Executive Session to the screening committee. The committee will be given a week to rank and respond. Community engagement in this process is heavy. No more than 15 – 20 members on the committee in addition to the Board and should have a cross section of staff and community.
5. After screening results have been received, the Board members, Steve and Barb Carr will select who will be invited for an interview. The screening committee only provides input to the Board, they are not part of the discussion or the decision making process.
6. 1st Round of interviews can be held virtually unless the Board wants an in person interview. The Screening committee is invited to observe the interview only, and can provide feedback after complete.
7. Reference checks are conducted between 1st and 2nd round of interviews. Site visits can also occur at this time.
8. Finalist Forum is a day in the community with the finalists. They are invited for a second interview with just the Board and a meet and greet with the community and staff. This can occur under a structured format. If there are any red flags that arise from reference checks, etc. they will be addressed during the 2nd interview.
9. At the end of the day the Board identifies their choice, they move into negotiations, and make the official announcement within a week.

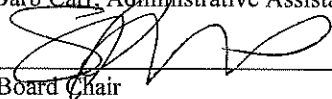
A question was asked about reviewing social media of applicants. Steve Kelley highly recommended not doing this. Any concerns that is had OSBA will address at the front of the process giving the applicant a chance to address.

Next DEMSP Session will be held October 16th 9a.m. – 12:00 p.m. virtually. If Steve Kelley is unable to get the Board Self-Assessment document ready by the 16th the back-up date will be October 23rd. The last 2 sessions will be held with the District Leadership Team and will be in person.

ADJOURNED: Workshop adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

ADJOURNED

Submitted by Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant



Board Chair



District Clerk

