MEETING MINUTES

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD of DIRECTORS
Workshop Meeting – September 23, 2026
Vernonia Schools, 1000 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** A Workshop of the Board of Directors of Vernonia School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 4:01p.m. by Greg Kintz, Board Chair. — MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Board Present: Tony Holmes, Chris McManus, Alicia Mahoney, Amy Cieloha, and Greg Kintz. Joanie Jones arrived at 5:00 p.m. — BOARD PRESENT

Board Absent: Lisa Curry — BOARD ABSENT

Staff Present: Darla Waite-Larkin, Superintendent; and Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant. — STAFF PRESENT

Visitors Present: Mike Scott, Righttime Coaching — VISITORS PRESENT

Welcome and Introductions: Mike Scott introduced himself and asked the group to introduce themselves. Board members shared their "why" for being a board member. — ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES TRAINING

It was shared that when the Board and Superintendent work together as a team, great possibilities can happen. Proposed meeting norms were highlighted: balance participation between speaking and listening. Make progress on board issues, have respectful dialogue, ask questions, focus on solutions, and have student-centered decision making.

Board members shared what they were most proud up last year and also what improvements they'd like to see this year.

Mike Scott shared the high stakes currently being seen for board/superintendent teams in relation to confidence in the organization, attainment of goals, positive impact on student achievement, impact on staff morale, and superintendent longevity (average of 3 years).

Roles and Responsibilities

- Board members are not elected to manage the organization, but rather to provide direction through vision and goals.
- The Board governs: establishment of goals, adopts policies, approves the budget, evaluates the superintendent, and represents the community
- The Superintendent manages: daily operations, personnel, programs and services, implementation of board direction, provides meaningful engagement opportunities for board members on topics impacting the district

Effective Boards: shared value and belief that all students can learn, unified governance with superintendent, data monitoring, community engagement, conditions for success, board bonding and bridging.

Ineffective Boards: micromanagement, personal agendas, disorderly meetings, refer to external pressures, less reliance on the superintendent, interpersonal conflict.

Scenarios of community and staff interactions with board members were reviewed and discussed.

The meeting was paused shortly after 5:00 p.m. for a dinner break and resumed at 5:32 p.m.

A discussion on goals was held. The traditional model had separate board and superintendent goals. The shared goals model has both the board and the superintendent team setting goals together. The board identifies action that they can do to meet the goal and the superintendent and their team identify actions they can take to meet the goal. Monitoring the progress every couple of meetings is important to the success of the goal.

Shared Goals Reminders:
1. Create a tight focus
2. Roles are different but the destination is the same

3. Alignment builds confidence in the district
4. Clear goals allow for better monitoring and accountability

The Board/Superintendent team is invested in each other's successes. Regardless of the goals, sustained change takes time. 3-5 years is where the meaningful and lasting change occurs. Some actions speed up a goal and others slow the progress down.

Behaviors that slow momentum / progress include reinforcing negative perceptions without evidence, reopening decisions without new information or clear reasons, stepping outside defined roles and not following through on commitments, sending mixed messages to staff or community and leading with criticism instead of questions and problem solving.

Behaviors that continue to move towards sustained progress include expect and normalize the slow shift from resistance to momentum, recommit to shared goals and revisit working agreements, especially communication and roles, normalize feedback, recognize teamwork, and celebrate progress, model emotional intelligence – pause judgement and stay curious.

Shared goals to consider: Darla Waite-Larkin talked about her goals.
1. Build Trust Through Visible, Consistent Leadership.

2. Improve Use of Highly Effective Instruction Strategies.

3. Strengthen Organizational Excellence Through Systems and Accountability

4. Ensure Long-Term Fiscal Stewardship and District Sustainability

5. Foster a Culture of Excellence, Belonging, and Continuous Improvement.

Discussion was held on these goals and Mike and Darla will update as discussed. The goals will be brought back for board approval.

ADJOURNED: Workshop adjourned at 7:12 p.m. ADJOURNED

Board Chair

District Clerk