

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J
1201 TEXAS AVENUE
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 9, 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 6:04 p.m. by Stacey Pelster. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Board Present: Stacey Pelster, Susan Wagner, Scott Rickard, Joanie Jones, Javoss McGuire and Amy Cielooha (attending virtually). Greg Kintz arrived at 6:12 p.m. BOARD PRESENT

Board Absent: None BOARD ABSENT

Staff Present: Aaron Miller, Superintendent; Nate Underwood, MS/HS Principal; Michelle Eagleson, Elementary Principal; Rachel Wilson, K-12 Vice Principal; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Gordon Jarman, Athletic Director; Rachel Brown, Bret Bunke, Kaitlyn Carr-Kiprotich, Olivia Keister, Robin Manning, Susanne Myers, Juliet Safier, Kendra Schlegel, Dylan Taylor, Justin Ward and Peter Weisel, Licensed Staff; and Katreasa Brown, Elizabeth Kintz, Karen Roberts and Traci Wolf, Classified Staff. STAFF PRESENT

Visitors Present: Jim Eckland, Allison McLeod, Scott Laird, Chad Dillard, Julie Ramsey, and Donna Webb. VISITORS PRESENT

1.1 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2.0 **AGENDA REVIEW:** Discussion items #7.4 - 2021-22 Instructional Calendar Adjustment Options and #7.5 - VEA/OSEA Memorandum of Agreement were added. Corresponding Action items #8.6 - Instructional Calendar Adjustment and #8.7 - VEA/OSEA Memorandum of Agreement were also added. #11.0 Executive Session was removed. AGENDA REVIEW

Scott Rickard moved to approve the agenda as revised. Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.

Stacey Pelster noted that she will work to keep all Board meetings to 1.5 hours.

3.0 **SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS:** SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS

3.1 **Principals' Reports:** Nate Underwood highlighted his middle / high school report by welcoming his new middle and high school staff. He also gave a shout out to teachers Dylan Taylor, Olivia Keister, Juliet Safier, and Vice Principal Rachel Wilson for their work during summer school. A total of 25 middle school students attended summer school improving 36 math and language arts grades. 11 high school high school students attended regaining 2.5 credits. Freshman orientation was successful with 25 students on average attending daily during the 3 days of high school orientation. MIDDLE / HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL REPORT

Michelle Eagleson shared that she has been very busy with last minute hires at the elementary level. She welcomed her new staff. Art Camp was held in August and classified staff member Jessica Kintz worked with 19 students during this fun filled week. Kindercamp had 23 of the incoming Kindergarten students participate during the two-week event. Thanks to teacher Mrs. Avy, Ms. Single, and Mrs. Schlegel students had a great experience, thoroughly enjoying meeting the teachers and making new friends. Meet the Teacher Night was held on September 2nd and was well attended by parents. Mrs. Eagleson along with Mrs. Schwartz, Mrs. Cheney and Mrs. Schlegel spent three days in training with the NWRESA on Instructional Coaching. This year long program will benefit and strengthen skills to support teachers in improving their craft. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL REPORT

Amy Cieloha asked about class sizes. According to Mrs. Eagleson, class sizes are currently between 25 and 30. Numbers are changing on a daily basis and there are still two open teaching positions (Kindergarten and 1st Grade) that she hopes to be able to fill. Filling the Kindergarten opening first is her priority.

K-12 VICE PRINCIPAL
REPORT

Rachel Wilson shared that the School Wide Intervention Support (SWIS) system will be used this year for discipline. Opportunity Room (O.R.) 1 and 2 will be functioning this year as well as a new wellness room for elementary.

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

1. OSBA cancelled annual conference due to pandemic concerns.
2. Classes did not start on Tuesday, Sept 7th. Curl School Bus Services had a driver pass away due to COVID and multiple drivers are currently in quarantine. There is not enough drivers available to run busses. Due to quarantine guidelines the first date drivers would be available is Sept. 20th. This is the target date for students to return to school. We are putting measures in place to pivot if something like this should happen again. A sudden change in schedule could happen again and within a minimal timeframe the school could pivot to full comprehensive distance learning (CDL) if necessary.
3. Currently the District has several staff in quarantine as is the high school volleyball and football teams. Three student positive COVID cases is what led to the athletic teams' quarantine. Our community and District are being hit hard by the pandemic. The District appreciates everyone's support and grace.
4. Two new custodians, Rachel Cox and Debbie Martin, have been hired. The District still has two open elementary positions, as well as the metals/welding teacher at the high school. It has been very difficult getting strong numbers of applicants for all vacancies. Hiring, overall, has been a challenge throughout all areas and this will continue to be an issue with substitutes. This is a regional and statewide issue.
5. The state mandate on the COVID-19 vaccination requires that all staff be fully vaccinated by Oct 18th. Fully vaccinated means that a person has had the one dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine or both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine. Fully vaccinated also means that 2 weeks have passed since the single dose of Johnson and Johnson or the second dosage of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine. Staff have the option of becoming fully vaccinated or file for a medical or religious exception. Staff can't be employed after October 18th without proof of vaccination or an approved medical or religious exception. Mr. Miller has had input from both the VEA and OSEA unions and has also had the plan vetted with the District's legal counsel. The District is responsible for reviewing and making a decision on filed exceptions.

Susan Wagner asked if the vaccine mandate applies to the School Board. According to Mr. Miller, it applies to all staff, coaches, and volunteers as well as anyone who is in our building as a regular contracted worker such as our copy machine technicians. At this point Board members are not specifically named and required to have the vaccine unless someone works with students. Mr. Miller is still unclear about the ability to have students report at Board meetings and how this might impact the requirement for Board members.

Amy Cieloha asked for clarification on who makes the determination on exceptions. Mr. Miller stated that he was designated to be the person that does this. He does not feel this should be his decision but this is what has been put in place. He further explained that medical exceptions require a doctor's signature. It is less clear on guidelines for religious exceptions.

6. Strategic Planning. This week's scheduled meeting did not take place due to the changes to the start of school. The process of developing the District's strategic plan is on hold. It will be done this year however, Mr. Miller stated he doesn't want to rush the process or do a disservice when bigger and more important things are going on.

Gordon Jarman and Jim Eckland shared information about the new Loggers stadium campaign. They shared a packet of information that includes a copy of their newsletter called the Bleacher Report, and also a tri-fold brochure. On the back page of the Bleacher Report a list of all donors that have supported their efforts so far will be listed. The committee meets monthly and their goal is to be able to fund the construction of a new stadium that includes covered seating, restrooms and concession space. So far they have raised \$112,000 with 160 people contributing. Logger Pride signs are on display around the community. They have extra signs if anyone would like one.

5.2 Financial Report: Marie Knight shared her report that is providing estimates for the year at this point. The ending fund balance is estimated at a little over \$300,000. The auditors will be working on the District's audit in a couple weeks. They will get into the details of last year. Marie is hoping it will be wrapped up and the finished audit will be presented to the Board in November. More accurate estimates for this year will be available after the audit process is complete. FINANCIAL REPORT

5.3 Maintenance Report: Mark Brown's report was reviewed by the Board. There were no questions. MAINTENANCE REPORT

6.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:

6.1 Committee Reports: Susan Wagner shared that although she has not attended any committee meetings, she has been part of correspondence with a couple of the teams she is part of. Everything is delayed until school starts. COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.2 Evening Board Workshop/Dinner/School Tour: Discussion was held on holding this on Thursday, September 23rd at 6:00 p.m. An invitation will be sent out. BOARD WORKSHOP / DINNER / CAMPUS TOUR SCHEDULED

6.3 Board Response Letter to Mask Guidance: At last month's meeting the Board discussed wanting to send a letter to Governor Brown expressing disagreement with the state mandates surrounding masks. Stacey Pelster, Javoss McGuire and Scott Rickard created a draft letter that was presented for discussion at this meeting. DISCUSSION HELD ON SENDING A LETTER TO GOVERNOR BROWN IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE STATE MANDATED MASK GUIDANCE

Susan Wagner shared a statement that she does not agree with sending the letter. The letter was written a month ago prior to the dramatic changes that have been seen due to the Delta variant. She does not feel it is the time to send a letter that is as aggressive as this letter is. She feels it is sending the wrong message.

Amy Cieloha was not in disagreement with requesting local control in our District, however there are bigger issues today than were present when first discussing sending a response.

Stacey Pelster read aloud the draft letter which listed all individual board members names at the end.

Greg Kintz asked if there is dissention against the letter by a board member can their individual name be removed. Stacey shared she could note the support or dissent against the letter by the Board member's name. Scott Rickard stated his concern about showing anything less than 100% unanimity and would not be in favor of listing individual support or dissent. It was suggested to simply list Board of Directors as opposed to individual names.

Javoss McGuire agreed that with new information on the Delta variant it does change things slightly, however he feels a statement against the mandate needs to be said and supports sending the letter as is.

Scott Laird asked Chair Pelster if it would be appropriate to comment. Stacey Pelster allowed his comment requesting that it be kept brief. Scott stated his concern for asking for local control. Who then would make the decisions regarding mask requirements, potentially ignoring the recommendation of health and safety? He feels this is a very dangerous thing to do.

Joanie Jones stated that she is okay with sending the letter but Scott Laird’s comment has given her pause.

Stacy Pelster stated that local control means giving the decisions to the director of the school which is the Superintendent. Our Superintendent lost control through this mandate. Local control means taking guidance and giving our rural community the ability to make decisions for what is best for us.

Susan Wagner feels tasking a Superintendent with these important issues will be subjective based on who the Superintendent is. Our rural location is impacted by the fact that we have staff that don’t live locally and travel into our schools from other areas and she trusts that the mandate is in the best interest of students, staff, community, parents, grandparents, etc. Susan further expressed that she acknowledges that there are many people doing research that are a lot smarter than her. She feels it is a mistake to make the statement and send the letter.

6.4 OSBA Elections – Nominations Open: Greg Kintz expressed interest in running again for the vacancy on the OSBA Board of Directors and indicated that he will be submitting his application for renewal of this position. Susan Wagner commented that as a member of the OSBA Board, serving our District and the North Coast Region, Greg has served us well. In order for Greg to officially run for the vacancy our Board needs to cast a vote of support.

OSBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS OPEN

7.0 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION

7.1 Confidential/Supervisory Bargaining Agreement: The draft agreement was presented. There was no discussion.

CONFIDENTIAL / SUPERVISORY AGREEMENT SHARED

7.2 New Hires: Aaron Miller shared the following new teachers he is recommending for hire at the elementary level - Frank Falkowski, Karla Myatt, Melissa Reynolds and Taylor Obley. He is also recommending Jennifer Johnston for Special Education.

NEW HIRE RECOMMENDATIONS SHARED

7.3 Staff Resignations: Two letters of resignation have been provided. Teresa Gore and Claire Youngberg, both Kindergarten teachers, effective August 5, 2021.

STAFF RESIGNATIONS RECEIVED

7.4 2021-22 Instructional Calendar Adjustment Options: Aaron Miller shared that the postponement of the first day of school took several days away from student instruction. Three options for making up these lost days were developed. All three options maintain student school days and teacher contract days. The options were shared with all staff for their input and vote and the results were unanimous for option #3 for the Administrators. Staff voted as follows: Option #1- 31.9%, Option #2- 24.6% and Option #3 – 43.5% of the vote. Adopting the calendar is an action of the Board so any changes also requires Board approval. Mr. Miller is recommending for approval, Option #3.

2021-2022 INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR ADJUSTMENT OPTIONS DISCUSSED

Javoss McGuire asked if potential snow days are still built into the calendar. Yes, these were not adjusted.

Difference between options were clarified. It was noted by Susan Wagner that if staff and administration prefer option #3, she feels the Board needs to support this. After discussion, the consensus of the Board was to go with Option #3.

7.5 VEA / OSEA M.O.A.: Aaron Miller shared that last year both unions had a memorandum of agreement (MOA) which provided staff with additional sick leave days if needed as a result of vaccination impact. This year they are asking for the same benefit. This benefit provides one day after the first dose and two days after the second vaccination dose if needed. Juliet Safier shared that there is the ability for a staff member to ask for one additional day if needed.

VEA/OSEA ASKS FOR VACCINATION IMPACT SICK LEAVE

8.0 ACTION ITEMS

- 8.1 Board Response to Mask Guidance:** Scott Rickard moved to approve the draft letter to Governor Brown in response to mask guidance as amended. In the last sentence insert the word “to” and change the signature line as Vernonia School District Board of Directors and eliminating individual names. Greg Kintz seconded the motion. BOARD APPROVES LETTER TO GOV. BROWN IN RESPONSE TO MASK GUIDANCE
- Susan commented that the emphasis placed on certain words that is included in the letter should not be there if the emphasis was not in the original document language.
- Yes votes: Joanie Jones, Scott Rickard, Amy Cieloha, Greg Kintz, Javoss McGuire, and Stacey Pelster. No votes: Susan Wagner. Motion passes.
- 8.2 OSBA Nomination:** Susan Wagner moved to cast a vote in support of Greg Kintz for OSBA Board of Directors as discussed. Joanie Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. VAST CAST IN SUPPORT OF GREG KINTZ TO RUN FOR OSBA BOARD
- 8.3 Confidential / Supervisory Bargaining Agreement:** Greg Kintz moved to approve the 2021-22 Bargaining Agreement with the Confidential/Supervisory Group. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. CONFIDENTIAL / SUPERVISORY GROUP ONE YEAR CONTRACT APPROVED
- 8.4 New Hires:** Joanie Jones moved to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation to hire Frank Falkowski, VES 5th Grade, Karla Myatt, VES 1st Grade, Melissa Reynolds, VES Kindergarten, Jennifer Johnston, SpEd Transition, and Taylor Obley, VES 2nd Grade. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. FALKOWSKI, MYATT, REYNOLDS, JOHNSTON, & OBLEY HIRED
- 8.5 Staff Resignations:** Susan Wagner moved to accept resignations from Claire Youngberg and Teresa Gore effective August 5, 2021. Amy Cieloha seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. YOUNGBERG & GORE RESIGNATIONS ACCEPTED
- 8.6 2021-22 Instructional Calendar Adjustment:** Greg Kintz moved to approve the 2021-22 Instructional Calendar adjustment with Option #_3_ as discussed. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. 2021-22 INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR AMENDED
- 8.7 VEA / OSEA M.O.A.:** Joanie Jones moved to approve the VEA /OSEA M.O.A. as discussed. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. VEA/OSEA M.O.A. APPROVED
- 10.0 MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE:** Stacey Pelster wanted to bring attention to when discussing a topic that as Board members they don’t bring up specifics for their children. The perception of this is negative. MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE
- Joanie Jones mentioned that she agrees with this. Comments should be more of a broader sense, not individual experiences. As Board members they represent everyone.
- Susan Wagner stated that it is easy to use an analogy and how our children would react to a situation, but board members are elected by a very broad district and it is a disservice when making statements that seem to silo and give the appearance that only one particular group, child, or sport is being considered.
- 11.0 CONSENT AGENDA:** CONSENT AGENDA MINUTES APPROVED
- 12.1 Minutes of 08/12/21 Regular Meeting**
- Susan Wagner moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Scott Rickard seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED
- Other Issues:** Upcoming DEMSP training will be held virtually. OSBA is offering an online webinar on Sept. 15th - Basic Roles and Responsibilities / Board Best Practices. Check email for the invitation that came out today. OTHER ISSUES


Board Member Handbooks were created by Barb Carr. They are for Board members to keep. Please let Barb know if you'd like any additional information provided.

It was discussed to add to the September 23rd workshop agenda the discussion around providing a response to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners' request for suggestions regarding local control. Barb Carr will notify the Commissioners that the School Board will discuss and provide a response after their meeting on the 23rd.

12.0 MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:08 p.m.

ADJOURNED

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



Board Chair



District Clerk