

Bend-La Pine Schools Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: September 15, 2020

Meeting Location:

To support Governor Brown's executive orders for social distancing, the Board of Directors conducted the Board Meeting virtually, through Cisco Webex. The meeting was also live streamed to the BLS Schoolboard YouTube webpage.

Board Members Present

Julie Craig
Carrie Douglass
Shimiko Montgomery
Melissa Barnes Dholakia
Amy Tatom
Caroline Skidmore
Stuart Young

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chair Douglass, roll call followed.

Public Input

Chair Douglass noted the Board received public input in written format and the following comments were read aloud:

- Return to in-person instruction and decision making process of the Board and district: John Hinman
- Reconsider the comprehensive distance learning and in-person/hybrid instruction review period from six weeks to three weeks: Katie Bien
- Request to return to school and in person instruction: Kate Broadman
- Changing the timeline for K-3 return to in-person/hybrid instruction and advocating to continue with the original timeline established by the district: Anonymous Bend-La Pine Schools Teacher
- Written public comment was also submitted by the following community members: Robin Bailey, Drew Bledsoe, Monica Brown, Carol Carson, Chris Cooper, Laura Cooper, Stacy Cox, Nancy Darling, Kristina Emerson, Sarah Graziani, Ryan Gallivan, Cassandra Jones, Robinson Knox, Sarah Lindsey, Christine Maclean, Sheri Massine, Shauna McDonough, Mimi Miller, Jessica Petkun, Kaari & Nick Vaughn, Debbie Wade, Kristin Watson, and Nicoa Wood.

Chair Douglass thanked all community and staff members who have reached out and written to the Board and noted all Board members have read every message. While the Board respects and considers all feedback, Douglass said there is no right answer regarding school reopening, as opinions vary widely on COVID-19 and what is considered a safe environment for in person instruction. Douglass said the Board and district leadership team has spent hundreds of hours to determine how and what is the best way to get students and staff back to school and in person instruction safely. Safety, equity, and guidelines set forth by the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority are at the forefront of return to school decisions, however, this is a dynamic, complex and constantly changing environment the Board and district are working in and trying to make decisions around.

Consent Agenda

Julie Craig moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Amy Tatom seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Reports

❖ **School Reopening Update**

Chair Douglass invited Superintendent Nordquist to share an update on reopening schools. Nordquist thanked the Board for their service and asked Katie Legace, Deputy Superintendent, to share an update on the first day of school. Legace shared that yesterday over 4,000 WebEx meetings were hosted by teachers as they welcomed students to the 2020-21 school year in a comprehensive distance learning format. She shared her thanks and appreciation for the tremendous efforts of all district staff members during these unprecedented times.

Superintendent Nordquist shared a report on reopening schools. She noted the new date for students in grades K-3 to return to in person instruction in a balanced hybrid model is now Monday, October 5. The updated plan has been created with student's best interest at heart and also a decision made as Deschutes County has met the metrics for K-3 students to return to in person instruction. She reviewed the metrics set by the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Health Authority and how Deschutes County has measured in COVID-19 cases over July and August. Nordquist shared her appreciation of staff, students and families for their flexibility and shared transition plans and timelines for K-3 students.

Nordquist reviewed the work that the district has done over the past months from teachers to the district's maintenance team and transportation departments and shared her thanks and appreciation for their efforts to meet and align with the return to school requirements set by ODE and OHA. Board members asked clarifying questions about reopening, limited in person instruction, cleaning standards, staffing, protocol for students and staff with COVID-19-like symptoms, and discussion ensued on the district's reopening efforts. Chair Douglass thanked all for the great discussion and work at the district level. Julie Craig shared her thanks to fellow Board members for their thoughtfulness and leadership during the past six months.

❖ **Executive Limitation 1 – Global Executive Restraint Policy Monitoring Report**

Superintendent Nordquist reviewed the EL 1 policy monitoring report in the board packet and offered to answer questions. There were no questions.

❖ **Executive Limitation 2 – Emergency Superintendent Succession Policy Monitoring Report**

Superintendent Nordquist reviewed the EL 2 policy monitoring report in the board packet and offered to answer questions. There were no questions. Melissa Barnes Dholakia complimented Nordquist on the Cabinet and leadership team she has put together as the search for a new superintendent gets underway.

❖ **2020-21 Enrollment Report**

Brad Henry reviewed current enrollment numbers. Bend-La Pine Online's program is now included at each level, by grade and Henry said the BLPO program's enrollment has increased significantly since the 2019-20 school year. The district's overall enrollment is down by about 1,000 students (in schools and programs) for the 2020-21 school year. He noted the Oregon Youth Challenge Program was projected to have 240 students and currently they have zero enrolled as they have postponed the start of their program due to COVID-19 and many families have chosen to homeschool or attend virtual charter schools which he attributes to the decline in enrollment.

Henry shared that like-sized districts across the state are all seeing about the same decrease in students as Bend-La Pine Schools. He also reviewed how the decrease in enrollment could potentially impact funding. The district did receive just over \$2 million to help support the purchase of PPE, masks, shields, cleaning supplies, and additional iPads purchased for grades K-2. Chair Douglass shared her concern about the large decline in enrollment and asked if we have asked families why they are leaving and where they are enrolling their students.

Action Items

❖ **Welcoming Week Proclamation**

Melissa Barnes Dholakia acknowledged the City of Bend is currently in Welcoming Week and read the proclamation aloud.

❖ **Superintendent Search Process**

Chair Douglass asked Julie Craig to share an update on the Superintendent search process. Craig shared that HYA has resumed the search from last spring and the job posting is set to close on October 8 with interviews scheduled to take place in November and a decision/announcement to be made in December or January. Discussion ensued on interview logistics and how to consider community involvement in light of COVID-19. Craig will bring a hiring process timeline to the September 22 work session for Board members to review and continue to discuss the search and hiring process.

❖ **OSBA Board of Directors : Position 3 Nomination**

Chair Douglass noted the summary and nomination information in the board packet and asked if there were any nominations for Position 3. No nominations were made.

Board Comments

Chair Douglass shared her thanks to fellow Board members and district leadership as they lead during these difficult times.

Shimiko Montgomery shared her thanks to teachers and staff as they started the school year off in comprehensive distance learning during very uncertain times. She thanked fellow Board members for their participation on various committees in the district and community and appreciates the engagement and leadership of all.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia noted that Welcoming Week is an important part of our community and encouraged all to look at the City of Bend's website to see what other Welcoming Week activities are happening and engage and participate if possible.

Stuart Young submitted the following written comment:

Fortunately, I could see everyone and hear all. No WebEx connection or audio but appreciated all questions, responses and the complex planning by all.

We know this year's school opening is an imperfect science. Safety first balanced with systemic preparation for rapid pivoting, is vital. Rapid pivoting is not our natural DNA. System pivoting is always cumbersome. Thanks to each board member, leadership team and staff person. And a shout out to a terrific community.

Things will get better. Great job all. Stuart

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Recorded by: Andrea Wilson

Approved at 10.13.2020 board meeting