

## Bend-La Pine Schools Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** January 26, 2021

**Meeting Location:**

The Board of Directors and district staff participating in the January 26, 2021 Board Meeting Work Session met in person at 520 NW Wall Street, Bend, OR 97703. The meeting was also live streamed to the BLS Schoolboard YouTube webpage.

**Board Members Present**

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

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chair Douglass, roll call followed. Chair Douglass and Stuart Young attended the meeting virtually.

**Review of Agenda**

Chair Douglass reviewed the agenda and noted the meeting tonight is a work session and public comment is not part of the agenda. She acknowledged the extremely large volume of emails the Board is receiving and said that all members are reading emails and attempting to respond in a timely fashion. Douglass also mentioned that tonight, the Board is attempting to model meeting in person safely, with masks and practicing social distancing, and also providing access to the meeting through a live stream feed for public access.

**Update**

❖ **School Reopening Update**

Superintendent Nordquist reviewed the recent updates to the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance, which includes updated advisory metrics for students to return to school. Nordquist noted the metrics, over the last two weeks have gone down significantly and feels encouraged with the trends our community is seeing. She clarified there are school metrics and county metrics which are two different sets of guidelines established by the state. Nordquist shared she has visited elementary schools over the last weeks and it is exciting to see students and staff back in the buildings and complimented the efforts made by school staff members, to make schools feel open, welcoming while also adhering to safety measures. She noted middle and high schools will begin student orientations next week.

Julianne Repman shared an update on vaccination efforts in Deschutes County. By the end of the weekend and yesterday, Deschutes County was ahead of the vaccination timeline established by the state. About 3,500 or more educators and support staff members have signed up and received their first vaccination. Repman gave credit to all the volunteers and community partners who have worked tirelessly to make these vaccination clinics happen. Nordquist shared her thanks to Repman for her efforts and advocacy.

Juan Cuadros shared an update on return to school, specifically the new District CDL option the district is now offering. Cuadros shared that 318 at elementary, 243 middle school and 218 high school students have indicated through the survey that they are interested in the District CDL program. He noted that his team is currently working to staff the program and looking first to those teachers and staff members who have indicated their desire to participate in District CDL; from there, if need be, the district will post any positions

that are not filled. Melissa Barnes Dholakia shared her thanks for the quick pivot to create the District CDL program and is pleased to know that the number of students interested are in line with the budget that we have allocated to support the program. Cuadros said that the district continues to reach out to families who have not indicated their intentions to return and also to make sure families understand and have chosen the right program for their student, this will continue to take place over the next week all across the district. Chair Douglass asked if the district could provide demographic data on students in programs once all the follow up calls and enrollments have been completed. Shimiko Montgomery asked about how the district connected with underserved student populations to make sure their voices are heard in the return to school options presented. Discussion ensued on the CDL program at the various levels and how the district continues to strategize, especially at the high school level, to offer as many course options as possible for students.

Paul Dean helped answer questions about school safety plans, return to school planning efforts, communication protocols, how to report concerns (students and staff), etc. He shared Governor Brown's office will be issuing updated guidance later this week about indoor physical activities and physical distance necessary.

Amy Tatom asked about a recent isolation and quarantine that happened with teachers; she emphasized the need for our community and district staff members to continue to practice safe health practices, including appropriate meeting sizes, wearing masks and adhering to social distancing requirements. Nordquist addressed the concerns and noted district staff members are continually provided and reminded about safe social practices. She highlighted the district's contact tracing and communication protocols for students and staff and also the efforts to coordinate information sharing with partners after school programs like Kids Inc. and the Boys and Girls Club.

Chair Douglass commented the role of the school district is to stop the spread within the schools, so measures like quarantine should not be considered a failure, but rather, it shows that the district's system is working. Quarantine is what happens when there is a possible exposure in schools and it is the district's effort to stop the spread. She emphasized it is every community member's responsibility to help stop community spread. Douglass also encouraged the district to continue to provide school related COVID-19 information and share quarantine, exposure, cases, etc. in a more user friendly format on the district website.

Nordquist addressed the data and indicators the district is considering to determine if schools need to close again. Nordquist also clarified that the guidance set forth in Ready Schools, Safe Learners is still required. This includes masks being required on district properties.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia thanked Nordquist and district leaders for their time and answering questions about returning to school.

## **Work Session**

### **❖ Ends Report**

Superintendent Nordquist invited Katie Legace to share about the work happening across the district that align to the Board Ends. Legace noted, due to COVID-19, several of the data points the Board desires to monitor are not available, however, there are many, many exciting things taking place in schools. Various schools and programs will be highlighted tonight. Dave VanLoo noted the impacts of COVID-19 and how it impacts data the district collects, like attendance and chronic absenteeism and how it tracking has changed over the past 11 months. Additionally, grading changes made in the spring of 2020 will have impacts, as will the information about students who go on to 2 and 4 year colleges and universities as that enrollment is down, close to 20%, nationwide and is not a direct result of district actions.

Legace said the information tonight will be shared in three main categories as aligned with the Board Ends: Academic Excellence; Passion, Purpose and Plan for the Future; Engaged.

### **Academic Excellence**

Julie Walker shared about Elementary Instruction, ELA proficiency, programs and professional development opportunities being used in the district, Lexia and Dreambox programs used Comprehensive Distance Learning which are providing teachers with student specific data, even in a distance learning format. These programs will continue to be used as students return to the classroom.

Juan Cuadros shared about middle and high school F data; noting the recent change to grading and implementation of common grading for equity policy. He shared the percentage of students at the secondary level with at least one F has dropped by approximately 7% as a result of implementation. Dean Richards spoke about 9<sup>th</sup> grade on track data, showing a positive trend, even during the midst of a pandemic. Richards also shared information about chronic absenteeism for K-12 which reflects some significant information about engagement during COVID-19 and how it has negatively impacted historically underserved students. Michael McDonald and Mary Thomas from Summit High School shared about the work being done at Summit High School to connect with students and support engagement and attendance.

### **Passion, Purpose and Plan for the Future & Engaged**

Legace introduced Bridget Montgomery from La Pine High School and Anita Moore from Bend Senior High School to highlight the work being done in School to Career, Post-Secondary Planning and Students Enrolling in College at high schools across the district. Legace shared data about student participation in rigorous coursework and introduced Paul Hutter from Bend Senior High to share about the AP and IB courses available in high schools. Hutter shared about the AP and IB courses and shared his admiration for the students who are continuing to pursue their IB diploma and complimented their dedication and commitment during the pandemic. Bekki Tucker from Bend Senior High spoke about the number of students enrolled in CTE and the variety of CTE programs available across the district. Legace shared information about graduation rates and noted the positive trend the district has seen over the past years.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia thanked all for sharing and bringing meaningful examples and information to the Board Ends. Board members asked clarifying questions about information shared and discussion ensued on the data and information shared. Chair Douglass thanked all for the presentation and information and is grateful and excited to hear about what is taking place in our schools.

Chair Douglass noted Nordquist wanted to make a clarifying statement about the staff quarantine comment earlier. Nordquist clarified that there was no inappropriate socialization by staff members and apologized for any insinuation of such.

### **Board Comments**

Stuart Young appreciated all the reports, the thoroughness of what was shared and complimented all on the great academic work being done being some of the most difficult times. He appreciated hearing Nordquist's opening comments about the enthusiasm of students, staff and parents in being back to school. He is excited about the level of vaccinations and grateful for the work done by all staff members who have worked to bring students back to school safely and added he is proud of the work that has been and will continue to be done.

Shimiko Montgomery said she will continue to remain cautious and noted her desire to continue to support and offer staff members employment and leave options. She expressed her concerns for historically underserved students and always wants their voices to be considered in decision making processes. She added that she is grateful for the efforts of district leadership and staff, however, continues to remain cautious.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia shared her apologies to staff and community members who emailed the Board this past week. She said over 500 emails were received and it was her week to respond; and while she gave it her best effort, the volume was overwhelming and she did the best she could to respond in a detailed, timely manner. She added her thanks to district leadership and fully supports the return to school efforts and decisions being made; noting her own student is excited to return to school next week. She is thankful for the measures taken to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Chair Douglass emphasized the responsibility lies with all of us to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. She feels we can safely open schools and encouraged all to continue to practice safe social measures that will reduce community spread which will ultimately allow schools to remain open.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Recorded by: Andrea Wilson

**Minutes approved at 2.9.2021 board meeting**