

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

**Meeting Date: February 23 2021**

**Meeting Location**

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

**Board Members Present**

Carrie Douglass

Melissa Barnes Dholakia

Caroline Skidmore

Amy Tatom

Julie Craig *left meeting at 7:05 p.m.*

Stuart Young *left meeting at 6:42 p.m.*

Shimiko Montgomery

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Douglass and roll call followed.

**Review of the Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda. Douglass noted tonight is a work session where the Board will focus on key board work and initiatives.

**Work Session : Instructional Programs**

Superintendent Nordquist noted one of the district's strategic priorities is a focus on instructional improvement and tonight members of the Excellence in Equity Team are in attendance to discuss areas for growth, review of data and looking various ways a grading model can give students feedback that motivates and further engages them in their education.

Katie Legace said the focus for this evening will be equitable around grading practices with data review, overview of systems implemented at Cascade Middle School and Realms Middle and High Schools, and discussion around next steps and goals for the future. Dean Richards reviewed F data from the first semester of the 2020-21 school year and the recent implementation of a common grading for equity policy in November of 2020. He reviewed F data for subgroups, including current EL, students of color, special education and free and reduced lunch at the middle and high schools. Richards also commented on four year graduation rate data over the past five years noting trends for historically underserved and not historically underserved subgroups of students.

Cascade Middle School principal, Stephen DuVal, and science teacher, Katie Lyons, shared how the staff at Cascade Middle School determined a standards based grading model was the best option for their school. DuVal gave examples of what standards-based grading focuses on and how it allows for mastery of content / skills vs. getting a specific score on an assignment or test. He also shared about the rubrics students receive, which states the academic standards they will be graded on. Rubrics are consistent across all classrooms. DuVal reviewed the benefits of a standards rubric for teachers and the data this system provides for staff to evaluate effective teaching practices.

Katie Lyons shared what standards based grading looks like in her classroom, commenting on the values from a teacher's perspective. Lyons' shared an evaluation of values of "yesterday's student" vs "today's student" and how standards based grading shifts the focus to learning and understanding for not only students but teachers, as they prepare lessons and set expectations for achievement. She noted that many students are surprised at how hard it is

to earn a four (mastery) on a standards based grading model. Allowing students to have choice and how they work toward proficiency also supports equity and choice.

Roger White, principal at Realms High School and students, Sutter and Thea, shared about their experiences at Realms Middle and High Schools, specifically around standards based grading and student engaged assessment practices. White reviewed the interconnected system and practices that work together to help students become leaders of their own learning how they learn to use their own assessment data to drive their learning.

Sutter shared about his experiences at Realms Middle and High Schools and his appreciation for the systems used to score and evaluate work because it is less subjective and the standard and targets allow students to be more clear about what they are learning and why. The grading system doesn't make things easier, but more clear and more personalized for students.

White shared how Realms first implemented standards based grading and noted it is a continual work in progress. Her reviewed the principles and practices for grading that Realms staff members use and showed samples of the feedback students receive and learning targets students receive in their classes from teachers.

Thea shared about her experiences at Realms Middle and High Schools and noted her appreciation for the clarity the standards based system provides for students and how it allows her to see where she has achieved mastery and areas she can work to improve upon. She spoke about student-led conferences and reflections.

Stuart Young asked, in terms of character targets, how are those measured on reports cards; and how are those translated to colleges or post-secondary schools. He applauds the energy and efforts that go into a standards based system and noted the challenge of using the best of this type of work across the entire system. Young thanked all for their time and sharing information this evening.

Chair Douglass commented on age based cohorts and how standards based proficiency work together and asked what would these schools want to do next if there were no limits within the system. Julie Craig asked about focus on quality vs. quantity and how standards based practices could possibly help eliminate a heavy homework load that some students have expressed concern over. Melissa Barnes Dholakia shared her appreciation for the information and the visuals to help explain and understand standards based grading practices. She asked how schools ask students be in charge of their learning through student-led conferences. Shimiko Montgomery shared her concerns about students who have not had the supports in place to keep up with learning expectations during the pandemic and asked how students will continue to receive support services and work toward proficiency.

Discussion ensued and Board members expressed their thanks for the thoughtful and robust conversations about grading practices.

Legace introduced next steps on equitable grading work and noted the concerns and urgency the district has to move forward in establishing equitable grading practices. She said the district has entered into a partnership with Dr. Doug Reeves' organization, Creative Leadership Solutions, to help facilitate conversations and training on equitable grading practices. Legace said March 10 there will be an optional professional development overview for any certified and administrative staff members, and shared about the future professional development with opportunities available for staff members to earn graduate credits. In August, the district is planning to host the Innovation Conference plans to ask teachers to help lead training sessions and Dr. Reeves will also be a keynote speaker during these professional development days. Coaching, small groups, leadership training, etc. is also available with Creative Leadership Solutions.

Superintendent Nordquist acknowledged there have always been gaps in student assessment and grading, but have been exasperated by the pandemic. She noted the concerns expressed by many teachers in the change in grading practices and read an excerpt from a handout shared with board members.

### **Return to School Update**

Superintendent Nordquist shared an update on COVID-19 metrics and data in Deschutes County which are trending in a positive direction. Julianne Repman gave an overview of the COVID-19 dashboard the district has created and posted on the website. She reviewed how to read and access data reports in district schools for students, staff, etc. Chair Douglass shared her concerns around transparency and asked if there was a way to share data specifically on spread within schools and how that could be clarified on the dashboard. Nordquist also answered questions related to cohort size, district CDL programs, and hybrid instruction.

Dave Williams shared an update on OSAA athletics and activities and the metrics they are tied to, which, he clarified are the county's metrics rather than the ones used to determine school risk level. He noted spectator limitations at athletic events and shared that there is a livestream service the district will be providing free of charge to families and community members who would like to watch events. The district has made a commitment to play locally, have suspended pay to play fees for middle and high schools, and have implemented other efforts to support safe student engagement. He is hopeful the numbers in the county continue to improve so that students can continue to participate in more and more extra-curricular opportunities as well as allow for more spectators to attend in person.

### **Board Comments**

Melissa Barnes Dholakia shared her appreciation for the rich discussion with Realms and Cascade and all the behind the scenes work done to present and share data. She appreciates the Board having an opportunity to learn and have a deeper understanding of work being done on equitable grading practices. She also shared an appreciation book Mrs. Ertle's 4<sup>th</sup> grade class put together and sent to the Board. She thanked Nordquist and Williams for the return to school update and appreciates their efforts.

Caroline Skidmore shared her appreciation for the work of Tami Pike and Julianne Repman focusing on safe return to schools and contact tracing. She is looking forward to visiting schools and seeing students back in class.

Chair Douglass shared her excitement to schedule school visits and her appreciation for teachers and school based staff for all their incredible work to welcome students back into the building. She commented on the limitations of physical distancing as the reason why grades 4-12 are not back to full time like grades K-3. The next phase of critical work ahead is addressing of lost learning and mental health needs of students that have been caused by this pandemic.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Recorded by: Andrea Wilson

**Minutes approved at 4.13.2021 board meeting**