

Bend-La Pine Schools Board of Directors Special Session Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: July 31, 2020

Meeting Location:

To support Governor Brown's executive orders for social distancing, the Board of Directors conducted the Special Session School 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
Caroline Skidmore
Melissa Barnes Dholakia
Amy Tatom
Stuart Young

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Co-Chair Craig, roll call followed.

Discussion

2020-21 School Year Reopening

Co-Chair Craig introduced Heather Kaisner, MS with Deschutes County Public Health to share a COVID-19 Public Health Update and how COVID-19 could impact our community regarding the start of the school year. Kaisner thanked the district for the continued partnership with County Health and shared a presentation on COVID-19 rates in Deschutes County.

Board members asked questions and discussed case statistics, contact tracing, exposure, case rates for people under the age of 18, OHA and ODE metric decision making points, etc. with Kaisner. Co-Chair Craig thanked Kaisner for her time and expertise and opened up the for discussion on reopening.

Superintendent Nordquist shared the work and preparation taking place over the past months and the three options that are being planned for: comprehensive distance learning, hybrid learning, and back to school. Nordquist explained the difference between comprehensive distance learning and the Bend-La Pine Online program and how the transition from comprehensive distance learning and Bend-La Pine Online might look for students and families. She noted partnerships in the community regarding child care and helping support families and staff members who need child care.

Co-Chair Douglass asked Board members if they were comfortable making a decision tonight about the start of the school year. Nordquist recommended the school year start on September 14 (instead of September 9) and use a six-week time frame for the district to review metrics and make decisions about the next six weeks. Discussion ensued and Board members agreed to make a decision in an effort to support the district, staff and families as they plan ahead. Co-Chair Craig entertained a motion to open all grade levels in comprehensive distance learning, starting on September 14, with decision points to be made every six weeks (or thereabouts).

Melissa Barnes Dholakia would like to see a schedule set for the metric evaluation published for the entire school year, if not tonight, have it established in the next couple of weeks. Co-Chair Douglass shared her concerns and thoughts about how to connect with students considering that the start of the year is pushed back one week. She also suggested the district send out a survey to families to better understand their intentions for the start of the school year. Caroline Skidmore suggested clear, concise communication be made available to families. Stuart Young shared his support and noted the return to regular school is a community-wide effort and complimented the district for their preparations for a robust comprehensive distance learning program.

Amy Tatom moved to start the 2020-21 School Year on September 14, 2020 for grades K-12 in Comprehensive Distance Learning and reevaluate every six weeks. Stuart Young seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Tatom suggested including medical professionals in the metric review. Nordquist will prepare metric evaluation and decision dates for the Board to review early next week.

Co-Chair Craig shared her thoughts on communication efforts and how to be more responsive to families who live in South County as their needs are often different from those who live in Bend. Julianne Repman shared some ideas on ways to connect with Sunriver and La Pine families.

Public Input

Co-Chair Craig noted the Board received public input in written format and read the following:

- Dyslexia identification and support for students: Sharon Bellusci
- Questions to be addressed before the start of school in light of COVID-19: Mike LaTorre

Action Items

❖ Election of Board Officers for the 2020-21 School Year

Amy Tatom thanked Craig and Douglass for their efforts as Co-Chairs and their leadership during a challenging and difficult time. She suggested the Board consider going back to a Chair and Vice Chair model for the 2020-21 school year. Tatom suggested Melissa Barnes Dholakia serve as Vice Chair in hopes that she would then become Chair in the upcoming years. She suggested Douglass continue in the role of Chair because this is Craig's last year on the Board, and if Craig is willing, she would like to see her lead the superintendent search process.

Craig agreed with Tatom and said she would be happy to lead the superintendent search efforts and asked if Douglass has interest in serving as Chair. Douglass thanked Tatom for the nomination and shared the importance of the Board in the community. She appreciates how strong and collaborative the Board is and is willing to serve as Chair alongside Barnes Dholakia. Barnes Dholakia shared her thoughts about the importance of continuity and establishing Board leadership helps provide stability for district leadership. She is happy to serve in the role of Vice Chair alongside of Douglass and thanked Tatom for the nomination.

Stuart Young moved to appoint Carrie Douglass as Board Chair, Melissa Barnes Dholakia as Vice Chair and Julie Craig to lead the Superintendent Search process. Amy Tatom seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Chair Douglass thanked all for the support and is excited to lead with fellow Board members who are deeply invested in what is best for all students.

- ##### **❖ Approval of Yearly Business & Board Operations for the 2020-21 School Year : Resolutions 1902 – 1907**
- Amy Tatom moved to approve Resolutions 1902-1907. Caroline Skidmore seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.**

Board Comments

Julie Craig shared her thanks to everyone during a difficult time. She appreciates the time and devotion of staff members to do what is best for students in an ever-changing landscape, and added, we will get through this together and asked for everyone to remember to give grace and have patience as we navigate this school year.

Stuart Young thanked all of those who attended the virtual meeting. He asked for community support to help reduce infection rates so students can return to school.

Caroline Skidmore shared a community call to action to help support our youth return to school by reducing the infection rates in our community, state and nation.

Amy Tatom reminded all to please cover your nose when you wear your mask.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia acknowledged the work the district is doing around equity and is excited to discuss equity as it relates to the district and Board's vision further at the August 4 board retreat.

Douglass thanked Superintendent Nordquist for her leadership during these challenging times and is also excited for the Board retreat.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Recorded by: Andrea Wilson

Approved at 8.25.2020 board meeting