

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

Meeting Date: February 9, 2021

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

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

Board Members Absent

Carrie Douglass

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia at 6:02 p.m., roll call followed. Barnes Dholakia noted the meeting will be translated simultaneously on the district's Spanish Facebook page.

Review of the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Public Comment

There were no public comment received.

Consent Agenda

Julie Craig asked for clarification on administrative hires moving from regular to temporary. Superintendent Nordquist explained Kevin Milner and Wendy McCulloch joined the District CDL program as elementary and secondary administrators. Their positions as principal at Buckingham Elementary and High Desert Middle School, respectively, have been filled by the assistant principals on a temporary basis for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

Stuart Young moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Amy Tatom seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Action Items

❖ **Resolution 1909 : Classified Employee Appreciation Week**

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia noted March 1-5 is Classified Employee Appreciation week. She shared her thanks to all classified employees in the district and noted the incredible contributions they make on a daily basis. Barnes Dholakia asked Julie Craig to read the resolution out loud.

Caroline Skidmore moved to approve Resolution 1909 : Classified Employee Appreciation Week. Amy Tatom seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia acknowledged that February is Black History Month and noted the importance and purpose behind recognizing Black History. Barnes Dholakia shared comments on the intentional work and focus of the Board and district to elevate equity and anti-racism across the district.

❖ **Appointment of Budget Committee Member**

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia said three positions on the Budget Committee expired on June 30, 2020. Tom Bahrman and Sharon Bellusci's terms expired and they have expressed a desire to continue to serve on the Budget Committee, which the Board took action and approved on January 12, 2021. Heidi Slaybaugh's term also expired on June 30, 2020 and Slaybaugh has decided to not continue in her role. The vacancy was advertised and Amy Tatom and Caroline Skidmore served as a sub-committee of the Board to vet, interview and bring forth a recommendation for appointment to the School Board.

Tatom said there were seven applicants and she and Skidmore interviewed three: Shirley Olson, Ned Lutz and Jenn Lynch. Tatom said all three candidates were phenomenal, however, Olson rose to the top with her extensive experience in education and solid financial background and is who she and Skidmore are recommending the Board appoint. Skidmore agreed with Tatom's comments and thanked Slaybaugh for her service on the Budget Committee. **Amy Tatom moved to appoint Shirley Olson to a three year term on the Bend-La Pine Schools Budget Committee. Julie Craig seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.**

Reports

❖ **School Reopening Update**

Superintendent Nordquist shared that approximately 15,600 students returned to school, in-person, over the past two days. She noted, of the 10 largest districts in Oregon, Bend-La Pine Schools is the only one who has students returning to in-person to school. Nordquist expressed her thanks and appreciation to all district staff members for the tremendous efforts to safely welcome students back to school. Skip Offenhauser, Jim Boen and Katie Legace shared celebrations for elementary, middle and high schools across the district.

Superintendent Nordquist reviewed state and county metrics, noting there is a positive downward trend in case counts and encouraged all community members to continue with safe practices to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, which helps keep schools open.

Nordquist shared numbers of how students are currently enrolled across the district: 15,605 students are attending school in-person, 1,377 are enrolled in Bend-La Pine Schools Online (BLPO) and 546 in the District CDL program. Nordquist shared a demographic breakdown of student enrollment: 89% of district students have returned to in-person learning, 92% of students who are served with an IEP have returned to in-person learning, 90% of economically disadvantaged students have returned to in-person learning, and 91% of the district's Hispanic/Latino students have returned to in-person learning. She complimented the efforts of the BLPO and District CDL programs to help serve students who are not ready or unable to return to in-person instruction.

Tami Pike reviewed the district's COVID-19 safety guidance and what happens when a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 and has been at a school site; including notification, isolation, case investigation, contact tracing, close contacts, notification, and quarantine. Pike emphasized the district's top priority is staff and student safety. Board members asked clarifying questions and discussion ensued about return to school safety efforts, cohorts, social distancing efforts in schools, lunch time and where students are eating, transportation, ventilation in schools and on school buses, and HVAC system operation. Stuart Young shared his excitement and complimented district staff members for their expertise and efforts to help bring students back to school safely. He also thanked and encouraged students and community members to continue safe practices as their efforts help keep schools open.

❖ **High Desert Education Service District – Local Service Plan**

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia introduced Paul Andrews, High Desert ESD Superintendent to share about the Local Service Plan. Andrews introduce Peggy Kinkade and Scott Reynolds, HDESD Board members, representing Bend-La Pine Schools and thanked them both for their leadership and service. Andrews reviewed the 2021-22 LSP, included in the board packet. He reviewed the core services provided, new elements of the LSP, and highlighted the district and ESD's partnership over the past years. Andrews offered to help answer any questions and

thanked Board members for the continued partnership. He asked, if the Board would consider taking action to approve the Local Service Plan as presented.

Julie Craig moved to approve the HDESD Local Service Plan as presented. Stuart Young seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Barnes Dholakia thanked Andrews for the presentation and noted a change to the agenda; moving the Strategic Priorities Update to take place next.

❖ **Strategic Priorities Update : Student / Family / Community Voice & Instructional Practices**

Kinsey Martin shared about the work the LEAD Cohort (Leading for Equity and Anti-Racist Dialogue) has been doing and their plans looking forward. The LEAD Cohort is comprised of 25 teachers from across the district, representing all levels. Their goal; over the course of the next two years, includes: 1) recommend standards based resources for colleagues, 2) demonstrate resources and approaches, 3) connect with community partners, 4) design resources for addressing Title VI violations and bullying, and 5) commit to ongoing personal and professional leadership development to promote equity in all classrooms, schools and community spaces.

Martin shared how the LEAD Cohort will be approaching their work including professional development opportunities, book studies, consultant expertise, offering a variety of workshops and continued engagement with community partners. Dawn Roberts, teacher at Sky View Middle School and member of the LEAD Cohort, shared about the work accomplished from October 2020 – January 2021 and gave an example of implementation and resources she has helped support at Sky View. Roberts emphasized the need for support from district leaders and providing staff members a safe space to engage in difficult and meaningful dialogue.

Ami Zepnewski, teacher at Pacific Crest Middle School and member of LEAD Cohort, shared about the work being doing at Pacific Crest and the importance of building community. Zepnewski shared about tentative check-points and future work that is planned for February 2021 – June 2021 which includes implementing lessons with students in classrooms, sharing videos of lessons, developing tools for community member feedback and partnership, continuing the conversation and work of the equity audit, presenting at staff meetings, and continuing book studies.

Martin thanked Roberts and Zepnewski for sharing and noted there is great work being done across the district as outlined in Executive Limitations 8 and 13. She shared the success and challenges the LEAD Cohort has faced, noting the historical struggle with this type of work in the education profession and setting. She and the LEAD Cohort are hopeful for continued support from district leaders and the School Board in this work.

Shimiko Montgomery thanked Martin and the LEAD Cohort for their work and dedication and asked what support they need to help achieve their goals and what kind of resources would be beneficial to support their work, and what are discussions, trainings, etc. that are decided at the school level versus district-wide. Montgomery also asked what schools don't have a LEAD Cohort member. Martin shared there are several schools that don't have a LEAD Cohort representative, however several of the current cohort members are helping at multiple schools. Martin, Roberts and Zepnewski said additional compensation for extra work of LEAD Cohort members and investing in professional development, and an ongoing clear stance and commitment from the district around this work and support from district leadership are appreciated and essential to the work continuing to move forward.

Nordquist thanked the LEAD Cohort for their work to develop and build capacity in the district. She shared that there were over 100 applications for the initial LEAD Cohort team and it was decided to limit the team to a smaller number in an effort to focus and allow for creation of well-designed plans and resources to then share on a broader scale across the district. Martin thanked the Board for their time and opportunity to share and thanked Roberts and Zepnewski for being part of the cohort and sharing tonight. Barnes Dholakia shared her appreciation and is excited to see the work and changes underway.

❖ **EL 10 – Financial Planning & Administration Policy Monitoring Report**

Brad Henry reviewed the EL 10 policy monitoring executive summary and report in the Board packet. He noted the district received a clean audit and complimented Leah Bibeau and the Business Office team for their work. Henry highlighted priorities for 2020-21 and reviewed the changes to the state's Student Investment Fund and Federal and state dollars received as part of the CARES Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Henry shared the district will be purchasing an electric school bus through the help of grant funds and is excited to see how the first electric school bus does in Central Oregon.

❖ **ESSR Spending Overview**

Brad Henry gave an overview of the Federal and state funds the district has received, known as ESSR funds. To date the district has received \$10.8 million which the district has used to purchase iPads for students in grades K-2 (grades 3-12 already had iPads), purchase and maintain hotspot connections for students, purchase PPE, hire staff, support the District CDL program, and prepare for programs to help support extended school year learning for students. Stuart Young thanked Henry and his team for the clean audit and the excellent, fiscally responsible work they continue to do. Vice Chair Dholakia agreed and thanked Henry for his reports.

❖ **EL 12 – Legally Required Policies Policy Monitoring Report**

Andrea Wilson reviewed the EL 12 policy monitoring executive summary and report in the Board packet and offered to answer any questions.

❖ **Policy Update 2 of 4**

Andrea Wilson reviewed the executive summary and report in the Board packet and noted the recently approved policy ACB-AP: All Students Belong and regulation, ACB-AR: Bias Incident Complaint Procedure which are required as part of Oregon's new Administrative Rule focused on condemning symbols of hate and directs districts to address hate speech. Barnes Dholakia thanked Wilson for the update and appreciates the efforts to maintain compliance.

Board Comments

Julie Craig shared that she went to Juniper Elementary and it was fun to see the students in class and the excitement about returning to school. She appreciated the efforts to support safety protocol and noted that students were doing great. She is looking forward to visiting more schools.

Caroline Skidmore visited Elk Meadow Elementary and was impressed with their efforts to support safety as well. She noted the concerns of teachers and staff members about the learning losses of students. Skidmore agreed with Craig about the positives in that some of the extra amount of structure now in schools may end up being a great way to help with positive student behaviors. Skidmore thanked teachers and staff who are taking the opportunity to teach and celebrate Black History Month and appreciated Barnes Dholakia's acknowledgment at the start of the meeting.

Amy Tatom said she will continue to advocate for safe practices with school reopening and encouraged all to remain diligent in their practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19. She advocated for the district to continue to provide and increase educational choices for families and students who have found success outside of the traditional school model. She would like to see the Board pursue a student board representative and noted Salem-Keiser School District's recent addition of a student representative to their Board. Julie Craig agreed with Tatom and would like to see a student representative serve on the Board and offered to help with the process.

Stuart Young acknowledged the difficult work over the past months and the challenges that lie ahead, and is hopeful that everyone can remember to celebrate the return to school of more than 15,000 students.

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia reminded Board members that the Education Foundation is looking for a Board member to serve on their board. She met with the Restorative Justice and Equity group and shared about the community cadre they recently developed and is excited about their continued work in the community. Barnes Dholakia shared that the district hosted a virtual meeting for any community member interested in running for school board and

approximately 15 community members attended. There is another session scheduled for this Friday and the sessions have been recorded and will be posted to the district's website in both English and Spanish. Barnes Dholakia shared that the Board has been working with incoming superintendent, Dr. Steven Cook, and he is beginning to connect with more community and district groups as part of his onboarding efforts. She also commented on how excited she is to see students back in school and appreciates that the district was able to pivot quickly to create and provide a District CDL program for students who are not able to or ready to return to in-person instruction. She thanked the community for continuing with best practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Recorded by: Andrea Wilson

Minutes approved at 3.9.2021 board meeting