

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

Meeting Date: April 27, 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

Carrie Douglass
Melissa Barnes Dholakia
Caroline Skidmore
Amy Tatom
Julie Craig
Stuart Young (*joined at 5:36 and left at 7:00*)
Shimiko Montgomery

Call to Order

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

Review of the Agenda

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

Work Session: School & District Culture/Instructional Programs

Superintendent Nordquist mentioned that the Board and District Leadership have worked for over a year to find a systematic way to gather voices of students, families, and staff. Dave VanLoo, Director of School Improvement, researched different options and recommended the YouthTruth Survey. Nordquist noted that in thinking about the district's strategic priorities in terms of empowering student and family voice in our decision making; creating healthier, safer, more equitable school environments; and thinking about core instructional practices, three strategic priorities were addressed in part by the YouthTruth Survey.

Dave VanLoo shared that the district's participation with YouthTruth survey is a continuation of the district's ongoing excellence in equity work. The data presented came from a January 2021 survey of students, staff and families. The core themes of the surveys were engagement and empowerment, culture and communication, and relationships. VanLoo shared that there are thousands of graphs and charts that can be pulled based off the data received and that the data is compared to all other schools participating in the survey which is approximately 1.7 million students and 280,000 staff and families.

VanLoo shared that the highest rated themes for staff were relationships with culture and professional development as the lowest overall rated theme; showing the most powerful role for administrators in this work is building a school culture where all staff understand that they can improve and to ensure staff have time and resources to engage in work to improve their practice. The highest rated theme for families was relationships with communication and feedback being the lowest rated theme. The questions regarding communication and feedback were focused directly on student learning. Across all levels the answers reflected that families, teachers, and students care about each other. Students rated relationships as the highest theme and academic challenge (middle school level) and college and career readiness (high school level) were the lowest rated themes. At the middle school level, students revealed that their classes didn't make them think about their answers. VanLoo shared that ensuring consistent and equitable access to work that is at or above grade level is high on the short list of things we can improve in the district to ensure equitable excellence. At the high school level, the student answers showed that it's less about academic knowledge and more about process knowledge; the process around the steps necessary for applying for college or steps necessary for entering into a career of interest.

Kelle Hildebrandt, Elk Meadow Elementary Principal, joined the conversation to discuss how leadership from each school will work to close the feedback loop with students, families, and staff. Hildebrandt mentioned that she plans to write a "we hear you" letter to families to let them know the information they shared was heard. She also plans to provide data to her staff in small portions to allow them time to process each piece in regards to strengths and areas that require additional thinking and work. Hildebrandt looks forward to working with her leadership team to improve on family engagement as that was a low rated theme across the board at the elementary level.

Mike Franklin, Skyline High School Principal, joined the conversation to discuss how his school plans to dig into the data to guide improvement actions. He explained how Skyline High School processes data and uses a protocol to ensure the data is the main focus. After looking at the facts, they use their interpretations and wanderings to look at the implications for their school and then at next steps for improvable outcomes before prioritizing the items that will have the most positive impact.

Superintendent Nordquist noted that the district has done some initial thinking specifically regarding the low rated themes of middle schools lacking academic challenge and college and career readiness at the high school level and how those are related to K-12 across the board. Kate Legace discussed the data and how the district can start backwards mapping from high school to elementary to create graduate profiles for all students. Legace also discussed the need to create a comprehensive plan for tracking data after graduation and for creating a plan to ensure all graduates are ready for their post-secondary plans.

Dave VanLoo discussed that the next steps for our district is thinking about professional learning for all staff. He discussed the five key teaching strategies to promote professional learning in the classroom to support high quality classroom instruction.

Chair Douglass acknowledged the team and thanked them for the data that is much more valuable than previous sources and thanked them for their efforts in putting the data together before opening the meeting for discussion and questions.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia echoed Chair Douglass' appreciation to the team for their work with gathering the data. She discussed how gathering this type of data is deeply appreciated as it is in alignment with the Board goals. Barnes Dholakia thanked Mike Franklin and Kelle Hildebrandt for discussing how the data relates directly to their schools. She encouraged the district to find time during the school day for staff and students to complete future surveys to promote participation. She also noted that authentic, relevant curriculum for all students is key to preparing for the future.

Shimiko Montgomery asked how the district can ensure the questions and answers are true representations of different groups. Dave VanLoo discussed the importance of using many data sources when making decisions. Superintendent Nordquist mentioned the importance of focus groups, especially student focus groups, for deeper discussions. Montgomery inquired about district's next steps and VanLoo reiterated the importance of closing the feedback loop this school year before digging into the data deeper in regards to school design plans for next year. Montgomery also asked about equitable grading in regards to the five key teaching strategies. VanLoo and Katie Legace discussed the importance of grading in relation to learning and an action research project that teachers are participating in. The participating teachers will present their findings at the Innovation Conference in August for fellow teachers.

Stuart Young reflected on a comment made by high school students at a meeting a few months ago in which they stated how important it was to own their own learning and the importance of developing this at lower grade levels as Katie Legace discussed in the backwards mapping concept.

Chair Douglass inquired about the data available to schools and to specific teachers. Dave VanLoo shared that all schools have access to all data and that because the survey was anonymous it does not generate classroom specific data.

A discussion ensued about the importance of increasing rigor of all coursework at the middle school level as opposed to incorporating additional TAG or advanced placement classes.

School Reopening Update

Superintendent Nordquist reported that the district has had 58 COVID cases in the last 10 days and approximately 700 students, or 5%, in some level of quarantine. Despite lessons and classwork being available to students on Canvas, teachers are struggling with teaching lessons students when some are in and others are out of the classroom. Options continue to be considered as local case counts rise.

On a positive note, Nordquist noted that community partner organizations are offering volunteer vaccine clinics for students age 16 and older at local high schools.

Amy Tatom noted that the COVID-19 Dashboard on the district website does not appear to be real time data. Julianne Repman said she will work with the school nurses to ensure data is being entered promptly and that the spreadsheet is calculating properly. Repman explained the process for determining close contact and the quarantine process for schools. Currently there are no cases of known student-to-student spread in our schools. As a district we follow the best practice guidance of the CDC, OHA, and local public health officials.

Julie Craig inquired to what is being done at schools, specifically secondary level, to reduce the challenges that were recently exposed in regards to crowded hallways and lunch areas. Kate Legace mentioned that level leaders do frequent building checks and work with building safety teams to ensure monitoring is being done at each school and that she is available to help them make any necessary adjustments.

A discussion ensued regarding quarantine procedures and how we can best support all of our students in and out of the classroom.

Board Comments

Julie Craig thanked Julianne Repman for her hard work in partnering with local agencies to bring vaccine clinics to our high schools and looks forward to volunteering at the clinics. She reflected on how she was disappointed and frustrated with the public negativity towards the Board and District over the past year and encourages the community to reach out for positive conversations about difficult topics.

Amy Tatom echoed Julie's disappointment with recent public comment.

Caroline Skidmore thanked local partners and Julianne Repman for facilitating vaccine clinics, the nurses for their hard work, and the community for the positive emails that have been received in support of the vaccine clinics.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia thanked Dave VanLoo again for the data and thoughtful analysis of the data as it helps the Board do the work necessary. She thanked fellow board members for their comments and reiterated that the ultimate goal is to keep kids in school and is proud of the work Bend-La Pine Schools is doing.

Chair Douglass echoed the comments in appreciation to everyone that helped Bend-La Pine Schools reopen. She stated that our goal is for kids to be in school and learning at high levels; every decision made is centered around that goal.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Recorded by: Janet Bojanowski

Minutes approved at 5.11.2021 Board Meeting