

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Corvallis School District 509J
 1555 SW 35th Street
 Corvallis, OR 97333

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Gable called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 1555 SW 35th Street, Corvallis. Chair Gable dispensed with the calling of the roll and the secretary recorded those present as listed below.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cyrel Gable, Chair
 Sara Gelser, Vice Chair
 Robert Baldwin, Member
 Nell O'Malley, Member
 Joan Demarest, Member
 Kari Rieck, Member

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED

Robert Johnson, Member

EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT

Jim Ford, Superintendent
 Ron Corbell, Assistant Superintendent
 Jeanne Holmes, Assistant to the Superintendent
 Kathy Rodeman, Business Services Director
 Fred Wright, Auxiliary Services Director
 Dawn Tarzian, Teaching and Learning Director
 Sharon Thornagle, Student Services Director
 Laverne Pitts, Corvallis Public Schools Foundation Director
 Julie Catala, Board Secretary

PRINCIPALS PRESENT

Lois Rawers, Hoover Elementary
 James Wickman, Westland Middle
 Gerry Kosanovic, Wilson Elementary

A quorum was present and due notice had been published.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Gable led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. COMMITTEE/BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Chair Gable announced changes to the agenda:

- Roller Coaster Physics would precede Citizen Participation

- Community Survey would precede the Administrative Review Task Force - Superintendent Recommendations.

IV. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

No students were present at the meeting.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Ford announced the District's low dropout rate would be celebrated at halftime at the Mr. Spartan/Mr. CV basketball game April 16.

Superintendent Ford reported that seven of the District's nine Destination Imagination teams qualified for the state tournament. Destination Imagination is an international organization for kindergarten through college students that teaches life skills and expands imaginations through team-based creative problem solving. Parents organize and coach the teams. Through the program Bill Anderson, a Crescent Valley senior, received a full tuition college scholarship.

Because he did not get a great response to the 150 invitations sent to District retirees, Dr. Ford reported that he canceled the proposed meeting to discuss their volunteering. In the interim he became aware of some examples that already existed. One such example is a group of about 17 retired Garfield employees who support that school's artist in residence program. They provide materials, help set up and clean up and assist students during the sessions.

Brian Flannery was named to the newly established position of Extended Learning Coordinator. He will be coordinating efforts for both high schools to expand learning options. This will include helping design internship programs and expanding electronic learning. In light of this direction Superintendent Ford noted that the District needs to begin examining policies that are in the way of opening alternatives to credit.

Superintendent Ford announced a principal had been selected for Hoover Elementary and the process would be extended to procure one for Mt. View Elementary. He hopes to have that position filled by May 4. Teaching and Learning Director Dawn Tarzian came forward to introduce Tonja Everest as the new principal for Hoover who will begin her duties with the next school year. Ms. Everest is currently a Scio elementary school principal.

VI. SPECIAL REPORT - DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE - ROLLER COASTER PHYSICS

Westland Middle School teachers Matt Stephens, John Houston, and Jared Cordon came forward to present information on an extra-curricular program called Roller Coaster Physics.

Roller Coaster Physics students meet for 18 weeks from January to May using hands-on

materials and project books which simulate theme park ride traits and properties of physics. The learning culminates in a 3-day trip to a San Jose theme park that closes for four days to allow about 60-90 schools each day to experience the park, bringing to life their newly gained science and math knowledge. Corvallis students also visit the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, and the Exploratorium.

Mr. Stephens explained his inspiration for beginning the program was to encourage the involvement of girls in science. Forty students are enrolled in this year's program, which is the largest to date. Mr. Cordon explained that English as a Second Language students have higher drop out rates than the rest of the population and tend not to take math and science classes so an effort is being made to increase their involvement in the program. The cost of the program is \$400 per student so a goal is to sponsor three to four students each year.

Mr. Stephens said the program has a large impact. He has been doing some pre and post testing of students that have been involved in the program and he is hoping to track the students' future progress.

Mr. Stephens and Mr. Houston have been involved in publishing the curriculum for other districts to use.

Chair Gable commented that the innovative program is where the District wants to go.

VII. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Denise Cardinali, 6017 SW Grand Oaks, Corvallis, spoke to the Administrative Review Task Force Report and expressed her view that regarding the special education data further research and clarifications were needed to provide valid comparisons. She felt the information gained might better explain the District's spending being the highest among the nine comparator districts than the reason provided, that the District has a low caseload ratio. She noted the high number of autistic students in the District who require additional support and the ability for some Districts such as Lake Oswego to possibly use their educational service district to a greater extent to serve special needs students. She also commented that with Lake Oswego's higher income levels parents of children with more significant special needs might seek private assistance and schooling for their children. (A written rendition of her testimony is filed in Section V of the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

Director Johnson joined the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

VIII. STAFF PARTICIPATION

Chair Gable requested speakers limit themselves to two to three minutes as the meeting's regular agenda was expected to last until 9:30 even without citizen and staff participation. She added that though the Board would not react at this time they would be intently listening.

Rob Cornell, Corvallis High School, distributed a comparison of 15 Oregon school districts with regard to teacher salaries and benefits as a portion of the general fund. (Filed in Section V of the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.) He stated the teachers have been in bargaining with the District for quite a few weeks and that with regard to the Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) the teachers and administration were worlds apart. He felt the teachers could not go any further without stating their case to the Board. He feels the problem is one of perception. He stated that ERI is represented as an administrative cost rather than a benefit cost in the budget. Therefore, reductions or elimination of the ERI appears as a reduction in administrative costs. (He noted the ERI is not included in the distributed handout in either table.) Adding ERI to the benefits table still keeps Corvallis below the average of teacher salaries and benefits for the comparative districts. The flip side of his handout described what effect retaining the ERI would have on state funding, salary savings, loss of revenue per retiree, cost per retiree, and net savings in the first year. He said the worst-case scenario in retaining the ERI is that the District would break even and wondered if eliminating the ERI would be worth damaging the District's relationship with its teachers. He added that the only way the ERI would be a cost to the District is if teachers were to retire regardless if it was in place or not.

Bill Goslow, Crescent Valley High School, stated he would not have retired 1½ years ago if not for the retirement package. He would have continued another three to five years. This is his 31st year of teaching (he was hired back). He feels to withdraw ERI would be unethical if not immoral.

Carol Nelson, Westland Middle School, explained that even though she took a \$10,000 pay cut and a slightly reduced benefit package to come to the District 19 years ago she was excited because the District provided curriculum specialists, staff development, in-service days, money for supplies, class sizes averaging 24 students and in the year after she arrived the middle school teachers had a team period during the day with which to meet as a group and they each taught five classes. Now she teaches six classes, teachers meet every day before school using 20 minutes of their own time that was previously used to prepare lessons, and class sizes average 36. She stated it is not in any way an exaggeration to say her workload has increased by one-third. She works 50-60 hours a week and still cannot get it all done. She noted that even with the difficult financial times the District provides a high quality education with high test scores and low dropout rates due to teachers who do not say no. It takes a toll and she expressed that it cannot be done indefinitely. The carrot is ERI. She will not retire early if ERI is not there. She added that if the District will not reasonably compensate teachers they would begin saying no to grading papers, etcetera after putting in 40 hours a week. She feels it is not okay for the District to renege on their compensation package agreement.

Penny Fulton, Crescent Valley High School, stated the ERI has played a key role at two pivotal points in her career. The first was two negotiations ago when teachers were close to striking. ERI was a major point of contention. She found that if she were to teach in Eugene instead she would receive \$11,000 more per year so if the ERI had been eliminated she would have left the District. This time last year, in her 21st year of teaching, she began looking at retirement options and realized that this was the last year she would be guaranteed ERI so she retired prematurely, earlier than she had ever anticipated. When she first started with the District she was scheduled to hit the top of the salary scale in ten years. It ended up taking her twenty. What fueled her was

the ERI. She implored the Board to keep this valuable benefit for loyal teacher service.

Meg Gear, Corvallis High School, a special education teacher for 24 years, stated she and her family have made crucial life decisions based on her expected early retirement. Her partner retired, signing off that State PERS retirement benefits would not be applied for, expecting to use Ms. Gear's benefits. Without ERI she will not retire early. She stated that it is unthinkable that the District would renege on an agreement made years ago as part of a compensation package and doing so would destroy the District's credibility for good faith commitments. She asked them to do the right and fair thing and continue to honor their commitments.

Nancy Benick, Wilson Elementary, read from a letter from Wilson teachers to the Board, filed in Section V of the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes. The letter refers to the ERI being established in 1981 in lieu of other compensation, such as salary, to keep up with cost of living increases. It also asserts that maintaining the ERI will be cheaper for the District in the long run and elimination of it would leave the most experienced teachers with an enormous sense of betrayal and injustice resulting in a tremendous blow to morale. She is eligible to retire in three years but will not be able to without ERI.

Rich Whitney, retired, stated he supported the previous speakers' comments. He would not have retired two years ago if ERI had not existed though he would have wanted to. He added that demoralizing staff is not the way to go.

Wayne Jackson, Crescent Valley High School, stated he understands quite a bit about reality, politics, finances and negotiations between teachers and school boards. He understands unreasonable offers are presented to reach a happy medium solution at the end of negotiations. Even so, he was deeply disturbed by the District's proposal at the last negotiation session on Friday. The proposal was for a one-time buyout of deferred compensation (ERI). Even though the interest rate used to calculate the net present value was unrealistic, the total figure did not reflect tax implications on all salaries earned that year thereby reducing the true value available, and did not take into account that individuals cannot obtain similar insurance rates as those available to the group, what angered him was that long-term employees were being asked to receive 1/3 to 1/4 of that amount. There was no offer of rationale for this reduction leaving teachers with the implication that this is what the District thinks they are worth. He stated that he has worked for 20 years in the District giving far above average quality and service, performing duties well beyond his contract, and has been paid less every year than he would have been without ERI. He stated the Board's representatives' offer by their own figures is grossly below average. He is offended and finds the offer disrespectful of the years of high quality service provided by teachers. He is wondering if he needs to begin adjusting what he does to be average or below average to match the implied opinion of his work to the district.

Jan Wicks, Cheldelin Middle School, stated she would be eligible to retire in January 2005 with 30 years of service to the District. She said it is disconcerting that it is unreasonable to expect the promised compensation because it will be a detriment to the students served. She does not like feeling guilty and ashamed and wonders what is less valuable about her compared to previous retirees. She said it is disappointing and saddening.

Peg Cornell, on leave, serving as teacher union representative, wished to announce that the teachers are working on their own website to serve as an information source with regard to bargaining and that the data being displayed and distributed from the BentonSentinal.com website was misleading at worst and inaccurate at best. She noted a twenty-year veteran teacher is not providing the same service as an entry-level teacher. She said a better way to comparatively present the data would have been to compare the same services over time, i.e. entry level teachers to entry level teachers and top salaried teachers to top salaried teachers. That would result in today's dollars about a 4% decrease for entry-level teacher salaries since 1976 and a 13% decrease in top-salaried teacher salaries since 1978. ERI is a part of the whole package of compensation to be considered. She concluded that in these tight budget times during bargaining it is important to be critical of data presented for the sake of accuracy.

Chair Gable thanked the speakers for their comments and announced a five-minute break at 8:28 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:35 p.m.

IX. SPECIAL REPORTS

A. COMMUNITY SURVEY

Kelly Middendorff of Moore Information presented her company's findings during a recent telephone survey of 250 registered voters of the District. (See Supplemental Item #VII-12 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.) Some findings of the report were that those of higher income levels and those who have children in school rate the District higher. Respondents' top concern was the District's budget at 64%, with overcrowding at 12% the next concern. Those in favor of passing an education ballot, such as a \$1.4 million tax levy, measured 56%, with support rising when told it was a renewal of a current levy. A 60% figure in favor indicates a comfort level of actual passage at the time of a vote. 29% of the voting population has children in Corvallis schools.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW TASK FORCE - SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Superintendent Ford invited department directors Wright, Thornagle, and Rodeman to join him while fielding questions from the Board regarding his responses to the Administrative Review Task Force Report. (See Supplemental Item #VII-13 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

As the Board had received Dr. Ford's responses in writing prior to the meeting he explained that he would spend most of his presentation time answering their questions. Prior to opening up for questions he commented on the Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) recommendation and provided more insight into the technology portion of the response, as Technology Manager Duane Jager was unable to be present.

He noted the ERI could not unilaterally end as was suggested per one recommendation. Rather, it needs to be mutually agreed upon through negotiations; the District team has suggested a way to do that.

Regarding the report's technology recommendations, Superintendent Ford stated that in addition to the information provided in his response:

- He is looking at squeezing a potential \$188,000 in savings between reductions in the department and transferring some services to fall within the Educational Service District's (ESD) provided services. (This figure includes the \$88,000 referenced in his written response.) Mr. Jager proposes banking the \$100,000 saved to provide funds for replacing equipment such as computers at the rate of 300 per year and the District's aging phone system (expected to be less than the \$500,000 original outlay). Currently, about 100 of the District's 2000+ computers are replaced every year.
- The District's technicians support more technology than most districts of a similar size. Cutting four support staff by 10% as was suggested, concentrating their time from the middle of August to the middle of June, would provide \$23,000 in savings, not worth the damage it would do in terms of maintenance to keep systems running.
- He is looking at potential \$500,000 of ESD funding next year through the District's efforts of squeezing and customizing their package of services.
- He is looking at a two-week on-line experience for all 8th graders to prepare them for taking on-line courses in high school, looking at \$10,000 from ESD for that.
- The District's new extended learning coordinator position results in increased possibilities for electronic learning. Training teachers to reach the potential of this tool provides another opportunity to contract with the ESD. The District is also looking at approaching the ESD for 1.0 FTE classified support personnel to work with kids enrolled in E-courses, meeting with them periodically to make sure they are on track.

The question and answer session resulted in the following comments being made:

- The newly formed District Technology Advisory Committee has had conversations regarding coordination of replacement computers as they relate to funds raised by parents for that purpose and Hewlett-Packard's matching donations.
- The Auxiliary Services department budget has been pinched harder than most. It might be possible to pinch one more time to see a \$62,000 reduction. Its overall budget has been reduced 30% since 1988-89. Possible reclassification of campus stewards or Maintenance 1 positions could be addressed in the 2005 Oregon School Employees Association contract negotiations.
- Consolidation of Effort is modeled by the District's food service department as they provide meals to Philomath School District as well as CH2M Hill and Creekside Café.
- The resultant Special Education budget may not be as affected by the cuts as it may seem as there may be remedies available.

Updates could be provided to the Board following Superintendent Ford's meeting with the ESD.

Superintendent Ford commented that he does not mind comparing with other districts but he does not want to hire another district employee to number crunch the differences, noting that at some point one needs to do what is right for the Corvallis district.

C. EXPULSION PROCESS UPDATE

Assistant to the Superintendent Jeanne Holmes provided the Board with a mid-year update on

the newly implemented expulsion policies and practices. The philosophical difference in applying expulsions in the new policy is in reserving expulsions for acts that are dangerous to society as a whole such as weapons possession, violence or threats of violence, and dealing drugs and less to alcohol and personal drug infractions. The goal is to assist students and keep them connected to the school. The committee also addressed inconsistencies in expellable offences, creating a reference chart for constancy. Principals will be surveyed regarding student behaviors that did not result in expulsions that would have prior to the new policy's implementation. Future updates can be expected.

X. CONSOLIDATED ACTION

Chair Gable asked that the "Award of the Contract for the Construction of the New Corvallis High School" and "Purchase of Property at 1361-1363 NW Fillmore Avenue" be held for discussion.

Director Demarest asked that "Agreement Between Corvallis Boys & Girls Club and Corvallis School District 21st Century Grant" be held for discussion.

Motion #48: It was moved by Director Johnson, seconded by Director Baldwin and unanimously agreed upon to approve the remaining Consolidated Action Items.

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were submitted for approval.

B. SUPPORT SERVICES ITEMS

1. SUPERINTENDENT'S LICENSED PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board approved the recommendations. (Filed as Supplemental Item #IV-29 of the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

2. IN-KIND DONATIONS

The Board accepted the donations. (Filed as Supplemental Item #X-30 of the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

3. AGREEMENT BETWEEN CORVALLIS BOYS & GIRLS CLUB AND CORVALLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT 21ST CENTURY GRANT

Held for Discussion: Director Demarest explained that she had asked this item to be pulled as she was questioning whether she needed to excuse herself from participating in approval of this item as she serves on the Board of the Boys and Girls' Club as well. Chair Gable explained a conflict of interest would only occur if she had a personal financial stake in the outcome of the decision, which she does not.

This agreement arranges for the Corvallis Boys and Girls' Club to provide after school programs to at-risk youth at Lincoln Elementary School per requirements of the 21st Century Grant.

Motion #49: Director Demarest moved to approve the Agreement Between Corvallis Boys & Girls Club and Corvallis School District 21st Century Grant. Director Johnson seconded and it was unanimously approved. (Filed as Supplemental Item #I-24 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

4. AGREEMENT BETWEEN CORVALLIS ARTS CENTER AND CORVALLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT 21ST CENTURY GRANT

The Board approved this agreement that arranges for the Corvallis Arts Center to provide enrichment programs to at-risk youth at Lincoln Elementary School per requirements of the 21st Century Grant. (See Supplemental Item #I-25 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

5. AWARD OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW CORVALLIS HIGH SCHOOL

Held for Discussion: Chair Gable stated she requested that this item be pulled from consolidated approval to provide an opportunity for Auxiliary Services Director Fred Wright to comment as the actual bid amounts were presented as an addendum as they had not yet been received at the time of the printing of the Board packet.

Mr. Wright explained that the low bid was higher than was hoped for. This could be explained in part due to a steep rise in steel prices and inflation due to the bidding being held later than had been initially planned due to legal appeals to the project. The bidders were asked to bid on an alternate accelerated schedule for completion, which the low bidder, Robinson Construction Company of Hillsboro, Oregon, preferred. This would put completion of the building at December 2005. To ease the move of the 1400 member student body, a possible three-week winter break has been suggested with the days being made up during the year. Mr. Wright explained that Robinson Construction Company was probably the lead contractor for schools in the State.

Motion #50: Director Baldwin moved, Director Gelser seconded, and it was approved unanimously to Award the Contract for the Construction of the New Corvallis High School, Bid #13-0304-4150-842-FW-38, to Robinson Construction Company in the amount of \$36,800,000. (Filed as Supplemental Item #II-9 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

Official groundbreaking will take place April 19, 2004 at 3:45 p.m.

6. PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT 1361-1363 NW FILLMORE AVENUE

Held for Discussion: Chair Gable stated she requested that this item be pulled from consolidated approval to provide an opportunity for Auxiliary Services Director Fred Wright to comment as negotiations had not yet been preliminarily completed at the time of printing the Board packet and were therefore not available for inclusion.

Mr. Wright explained that Phase 2 of the District's Long Range Facilities Master Plan includes purchase of residential properties located on the southeast corner of the existing Corvallis High School as they become available. Mr. Ron Cook, owner of 1361-1363 NW Fillmore was interested in selling his property to the District. The District's Land Fund, established from sales of District real property and dedicated to purchasing land for schools, will be used. Leases could capture maintenance costs. Closing is scheduled for May 15 with possession taken in approximately one year.

Motion #51: Director Johnson moved, Director Baldwin seconded, to approve the purchase of property at 1361-1363 NW Fillmore Avenue, Corvallis, in the amount of \$205,000. The motion passed unanimously. (See Supplemental Item #I-26 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

7. RETIRED EMPLOYEE'S SINGLE ASSIGNMENT CONTRACT – ALDEN

The Board approved this contract that enables interim Crescent Valley High School Principal Cathi Alden to remain for one more school year, 2004-05. (See Supplemental Item #I-27 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

8. RETIRED EMPLOYEE'S SINGLE ASSIGNMENT CONTRACT – THORNAGLE

The Board approved this contract that enables interim retired Student Services Director Sharon Thornagle to remain for one more school year, 2004-05. (See Supplemental Item #I-28 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

9. RESOLUTION NO. 04-0401 – TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IN GENERAL FUND AND TRANSFER OF RESOURCES IN THE DISTRICT DONATION FUND

The Board approved this Resolution which transfers \$105,000 in appropriations within the General Fund from Transfer of Funds to Community Services and transfers \$105,000 in Resources within the District Donation Fund from Transfer from General Fund to Gifts, Grants, and Donations. The net effect to the District Donation Fund and General Fund bottom-lines are the same; however, this will more appropriately show the use of General Funds for Community Services that is not otherwise apparent. (See Supplemental Item #III-13 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

10. RESOLUTION NO. 04-0402 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FOR GRANTS FUND (LESS THAN 10%,

NO HEARING REQUIRED

The Board approved this Resolution. This supplemental budget provides increased expenditure authority in the Instructional and Support Services functions to accommodate the additional grant awards received by the District. It is believed the District has received most of the expected 2003-04 awards making this an adequate budget increase. (See Supplemental Item #III-14 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

XI. CONSOLIDATED INFORMATION**A. CORRESPONDENCE**

Filed in Section V of the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ITEMS**1. INTERDISTRICT TRANSFER INFORMATION**

The Board received information on six interdistrict transfers.

2. EXTENDED FIELD TRIPS

The Board received information on eleven extended field trips. (Filed as Supplemental Item #IV-30 of the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

C. SUPPORT SERVICES ITEMS**1. NON-LICENSED PERSONNEL INFORMATION**

(Filed as Supplemental Item #IV-31 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

2. UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Board received the unaudited statements of revenues, expenditures, and fund balances of the various funds of the District for the period ending February 29, 2004. (Filed as Supplemental Item #X-31 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

3. CHECK REGISTER

The detailed check distribution ledger is on file in the Business Services Office and is available for information during business hours. (Filed as Supplemental Item #X-32 in the Official 2003-04 Board Minutes.)

XII. OTHER DISTRICT BUSINESS

No other District business was addressed.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board met in Executive Session under ORS 192.660 (1) (d) – Labor Negotiations.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, Chair Gable adjourned the meeting at 10:04 p.m.

Cyrel Gable, Chair

Jim Ford, Superintendent

Prepared by: Jolene Shute
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