

MINUTES

Work Session of the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Gable called the meeting to order at 7:05 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
 Nell O'Malley, Vice Chair
 Robert Baldwin, Member
 Sara Gelser, Member
 Kari Rieck, Member
 Bob Johnson, Member

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED

Joan Demarest, Member

EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT

Jim Ford, Superintendent
 Dawn Tarzian, Assistant Superintendent
 Kathy Rodeman, Business Services Director
 Duane Jager, Technology Services Manager

PRINCIPALS PRESENT

Jay Conroy, Corvallis High School
 Cathi Alden, Crescent Valley High School

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Marcus Annis, Crescent Valley High School
 Felsha Zuschlag, Corvallis High School

A quorum was present and due notice had been published.

II. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Chair Gable announced that the Board had decided to pursue the next steps in hiring Assistant Superintendent Dawn Tarzian as the next superintendent.

III. HIGH SCHOOL UPDATES

High school principals Cathi Alden (Crescent Valley) and Jay Conroy (Corvallis) jointly provided the Board a Power Point presentation that gave insight into the conditions and decisions they are facing in light of dwindling funding. Ms. Alden stated she felt this to be the darkest hour in education due to finances.

The principals noted both schools' high standings in college admissions test scores, standardized achievement ratings, and offerings of advanced placement classes and learning opportunities. They provided comparisons between 1991 and 2004 in many areas including curriculum, assessment, teaching staff experience, class sizes, funding for athletics and activities, custodial support, and school choice. A few of the areas have received increased attention over that time period and have seen improvements in alignment but many have seen deterioration. They named ways they are seeking to lessen the impact such as seeking grants, community partnerships, and extended learning opportunities. They listed alternative ways to address known areas needing assistance such as resources and enrollment and were open to questioning "essentials" and assumed paradigms such as looking at different ways to deliver instruction, administration, and services. They have contacted the Department of Education regarding accreditation allowances. They called this a time for partnership and understood there were no easy solutions.

Ms. Alden, in responding to Director Johnson's question regarding how graduates performed after high school, stated most of the information was anecdotal. Most graduates stay in Oregon. A survey taken in the sophomore year in college shows they are more resilient, stay enrolled at a rate equal to or better than average, and have higher college grade point averages than the typical Oregon student. She noted the survey reaches the approximate 50% of the students who attend college. Mr. Conroy suggested as there were a large number of students who do not go on to attend the university system that perhaps a work topic would be to do a 5-year out survey as he has concerns about students who are considering college but are not committed. Assistant Superintendent Tarzian noted that the District is participating in the Foundation for Improvement of Secondary Education grant that allows about four teachers from each high school to garner information from local higher education institutions as to what they see as important for entry and success.

The principals stated that what brought them before the Board was to seek procedural input as to how to find budget answers to the big picture, including the predicted 400-student enrollment disparity between the two schools in 2005. Ideally they would have the resources of the Board and community's best thinking as opposed to them making independent decisions about what stays or goes.

Ms. Alden, in replying to Chair Gable's question as to what extent they saw extended learning taking the pressure off, replied about 10%. Mr. Conroy provided the example of needing to have a second or third level automotive student being able to have an extended learning experience at a commercial shop off school grounds as opposed to an entry student. The teacher would have to provide the readiness skills.

Superintendent Ford noted that the District is known for site-based decision-making so to pull back and have some programs centralized (such as the suggested orchestra) would take time the District does not have. He also noted that the extended learning plan was put forth so that adult time could be reduced with more self-directed students. It is in its early stages and will not reach its full potential in the next few years. Learning contracts, another alternative, are also in the early stages.

Director Johnson expressed his desire to look at high school differently through a blue ribbon

committee that would not take two years of process. He was concerned that if improvements are not made parents who can will provide for their children in other ways and the disparity between the “haves” and “have nots” will increase.

Chair Gable invited the high school representatives to weigh in on the topic. Mr. Annis, Crescent Valley High School, felt that he had had a good high school experience. He did not see internships as taking the pressure off and noted they would add to safety issues for students. Ms. Zuschlag, Corvallis High School, stated she would like to have reviewed the greater percentage of No Child Left Behind and government funding provided to kindergarten to third graders to see if that was the best use of funds as opposed to secondary education. With regard to extended learning via community internships, she suggested that if juniors and seniors were to initiate the program they could provide a better example to employers, which would jump-start the program.

Assistant Superintendent Tarzian relayed that the principals were hoping for input prior to beginning the budget process in March and hearing public testimony in May. Chair Gable noted that the evening’s discussion seemed to be the tip of the iceberg and suggested that she could meet with Vice Chair O’Malley to discuss possible next steps.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, Chair Gable adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Cyrel Gable, Chair

Jim Ford, Superintendent

Prepared by: Jolene Shute

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