

MINUTES

Work Session of the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair O’Malley called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 1555 SW 35th Street, Corvallis. The secretary recorded those present as listed below.

<p><u>BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT</u> Nell O’Malley, Chair Kari Rieck, Vice Chair Helen Higgins Blake Rodman Matt Donohue Donna Keim Sara Gelser (arrived at 6:54 p.m.)</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT</u> Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent Jim Hogeboom, Assistant Superintendent Mary McKay, Student Services Director Jeanne Holmes, Human Resources Director Kathy Rodeman, Business Services Director Julie Catala, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent</p>
<p><u>STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT</u> Lynn Hector, Corvallis High School</p>	<p><u>PRINCIPALS PRESENT</u> Cherie Stroud, Crescent Valley High School Dawn Corliss, Cheldelin Middle School Mike Strowbridge, Franklin K-8 Tonja Everest, Hoover Elementary</p>

A quorum was present and due notice had been published.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair O’Malley led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Following the pledge, Chair O’Malley stated that the meeting was a work session so no public testimony would be heard. She announced that the next opportunity would be at the January 9 meeting.

III. DISCUSSION OF PROGRAM AND RESOURCES REVIEW (PR2) COMMITTEE WORK

Chair O'Malley provided some opening comments related to the night's work. She stated that the last six to nine months had been a circuitous process that had presented the Board with challenges such as a process with time constraints that involves many divergent pieces, people with very different levels of knowledge and experience and learning to work with each other as a team and with staff. She stated that the Board has a shared passion for providing the best education they can for the children of the community and that they are fortunate that they have been elected to represent the entire district. She sees the upcoming deliberations as an opportunity for the Board to remind themselves about the bigger context that they are all concerned with, things such as the District Improvement Plan and their common goal to support a strategic planning process.

Superintendent Tarzian acknowledged the Board's commitment over the last several months as evidenced through their time spent researching and communicating with the public. She reflected that the PR2 Committee's work illuminated the complexity of the interrelated facilities issues the District is facing. In considering avenues for the District's future, she identified factors that have and will influence the conversation. These include:

- the improved financial forecast
- a shift to adequate and equitable programs at each school
- completion of Corvallis High School's adjusted site plan
- possibility to use \$300,000 in state capitol improvement funds
- community input on grade configurations
- Decreasing demands on support staff and administrators enabling more money to reach the classroom
- Minimizing disruption of students

Chair O'Malley announced that Human Resources Director Jeanne Holmes would be facilitating the meeting which would allow the chair to more fully participate in the discussions.

Ms. Holmes reviewed the Board Agreements and noted:

- There would be time prior to adjournment to review the Communications Plan
- The meeting was scheduled to end at 9 p.m.
- That this meeting was not a time to put a stake in the ground but rather a time to listen and be open.

Ms. Holmes then asked Board members to speak to their current thinking about the continuing PR2 process, including the Committee's Process Recommendations and Observations on pages 111-112 of their November 28 final report to the Board. (See Supplemental Item #VII-7 in the Official 2005-06 Board Minutes.) These items relate to open enrollment, schools of choice, savings versus impact of changes, Corvallis High School (CHS) Master Plan, Franklin relocation, K-8 options, one or two high schools, preserving current grade configurations, modular use, urgency of or need for implementing

changes.

Director Donohue began by stating that the information contained in the PR2 Committee's work needs to be integrated into the District's real world needs of completing the Corvallis High School site plan, determining use of remaining bond dollars, incorporating the recommendations of the Equity Committee report, and aligning with the District's financial forecast. He added that values are hard to address holistically as concerns to address are large and the timeframe is short. He recommended including staff in developing a forward-thinking decision process.

Director Rodman expressed that he would like to see values and educational filters applied to the scenarios, something the PR2 Committee deliberately avoided. He suggested taking a more strategic long-range view of this issue and addressing it over time. He stated that he did not think the District would need to address the issues next year and proposed that staff (central office and schools) look at what types of things would work with one less building over the next six to eight years. He would recommend a 3-4 year implementation schedule.

Director Higgins stated that she understands that it would be 2008 before the District would be in a deficit situation, so the District has some time. She understands the District needs to address:

- Serious safety and maintenance issues at playgrounds
- Open enrollment - Unintended consequences have occurred from a great idea. When paired with a declining enrollment community it has created some behaviors that she does not believe the District wants to foster.
- Increasing excess capacity over the next ten years
- Core class sizes at the secondary level

The problem that the district is trying to solve in her eyes is, "How is the District going to realign its resources in this declining enrollment community to be able to meet increased graduation requirements, ensuring all children are meeting the benchmarks?" Based on that, she would like to see a readjustment of the timeline, agreeing that the process needs to slow down. She would like to spend the rest of the year and summer crafting some proposals that would meet the District's needs over the next ten years. Once the goals and metrics are designed, staff could work toward. Next quarter's agenda could include Franklin relocation, open enrollment, boundary fixes for under-enrollment Wilson and over-enrollment Adams, and the viability of Inavale. She would like to survey parents at all levels for the community's desire of K-8 and grade configurations. She said 2007-08 would be the desired time frame for school reconfigurations. She was not ready to name which scenarios she could or could not support.

Vice Chair Rieck reflected that the reason the District started this path last year was to save money. A whole-district approach was used by the PR2 Committee which she stated did an excellent job of looking at capacity and enrollment. The Committee also provided a proactive first step of identifying vital signs, the root indicators of trends that affect enrollment and funding at school and district levels. Excess capacity was the topic that the Board was expected to take over and solve, though doing so will

not get the District out of the woods financially. Director Rieck stated that she would be hesitant to enact a plan that is a drastic change for next year. She would like to step back and look at K-8 and small schools interest, inequity between schools, full-time high school schedules, declining high school enrollment and its relationship to capacity, Franklin's home, the viability of Inavale, and boundary adjustments. She concluded by stating to move forward drastically without a vision would not be advisable. The Board needs to work collaboratively with staff and community on the issues.

Student Representative Lynn Hector of Corvallis High School stated she was considering the value of the current configurations of K-5, 6-8, 9-12 and what possible way they could be changed along the way.

Chair O'Malley stated she was relieved to know that members were willing to let go of naming which scenarios they could and could not support at this time. She feels the need to know why the District has open enrollment and also recommends slowing down and finding what the community values now.

Director Keim read from a prepared statement. She stated that as a new Board member she has been relatively quiet so that she could learn. She stated that Corvallis has one of the best districts in the state with a dedicated staff and school board, something that is not always the case across the state as she has learned in her tenure. She would like to take this time, the first time in 10-15 years that the District will not have to make cuts, to determine "who the District wants to be," to set a direction as an entire community in a non-rushed process that is crucial for the future of the education system. She suggested making program-value decisions with appropriate facilities alignment following, using the remaining bond funds. She relayed her views raised regarding the topics on pages 111-112 of the PR2 Final Report, noting they were her views of today and she was open to more input. She desired to spend as much time on who the District wants to be as the PR2 Committee did with data gathering.

Director Gelser joined meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Director Gelser apologized for her late arrival stating it did not reflect upon the importance of the meeting. In referring to the District's financial forecast, she stated that it was stunning that there are no cuts planned for next year, and not until 2011 if the operating levy should pass. She said it is an unprecedented opportunity. She would like to see more partnerships developed such as the one suggested with Oregon State University in the area of math. She spoke to the topics on pages 111-112 of the PR2 Final Report, stating she did not wish to see open enrollment eliminated as it would create a different set of equity concerns especially with declining enrollment. She understands there is enrollment disparity between the two high schools and hopes the District does not need to treat open enrollment across the district due to the high school problem. She agrees with Director Keim that there are misunderstandings regarding Franklin. It is available to all through the lottery. She does not feel it is critical to move Franklin at this point. She expressed that the conversation needs to be continued regarding K-8's. She believes in two high schools and the 6-8 middle school grade configurations and does not believe she could support a change to the secondary structure. Though she feels modulars are not ideal she would not support their complete elimination as it would disrupt too many students. She

recommended that if it were to be determined that a school closure was imminent, that the District move forward so the school would not be living “last” days for a whole year. She would like Inavale’s viability given further consideration to include the possibility of a charter school. She recommended that the capacity numbers used to guide open enrollment decisions be reviewed as it takes 26.7 actual students to support a teacher. She thanked the PR2 Committee for their work.

After hearing each others comments, Board members entered into a discussion. Individual members expressed that:

- Not identifying which scenarios the Board could not support might leave unrealistic scenarios to linger over the time and cause anxiety
- Rather than deciding the likelihood of implementation of each scenario now, that the scenarios be put aside for future reference to be retrieved as appropriate to a relevant situation
- Knowing who the District wants to be might precede narrowing the scenario choices, not a poor reflection on the Committee
- The scenarios are tools, starting points, not 23 answers to one question
- The question could be asked: What is the District trying to accomplish? Why is the District having this conversation? Where is the District trying to go by adjusting these values items? Is the District trying to save money, trying to improve test scores by two RIT points a year, what is that ultimate thing that the District is moving toward? How does this affect teachers teaching kids?
- A weighing of cost savings versus impact needs to be considered. Only two or three scenarios, which call for 9 to 15 modulars a piece, reduced class size district-wide by one student. That is sobering.
- As questions opened up each door, there was another door there. The Board and District found out what we do not know yet. What sequence is the Board and District going to open the doors in? The Board and District do not want to make a hasty decision.
- Allowance needs to be made for the possibility that there are solutions that the PR2 Committee did not uncover.
- It is critical to understand that District practices caused some of the inequity and that middle schools have been underfunded.
- The true issues in the District need to be determined and the answers are not yet known.

The Board collectively agreed that they wanted to involve staff and the community in their decision-making process. They also collectively agreed that they did not want to make decisions on all the scenarios by January 30, save perhaps Inavale. Director Gelser related that Inavale was the third school on the Consolidation and Closure list and it has suffered since.

Ms. Holmes drew the Board’s attention to the list of topics she had created from the discussion and asked if there were further items they would like to add for Board consideration. Additional comments included:

- Related to the topic of who the District wants to be, it was suggested that who the District is, is pretty darn good. Changes risk that.

- Items on the list express a wish to discuss it, not necessarily that there will be an answer to the issue raised by a certain date
- Items are interrelated. For example: if the District were to remove all modulars, there would not be room for open enrollment. So, even in the discussion of modulars, one would need to have a discussion about open enrollment.

Chair O'Malley called a break at 8:00 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:09 p.m.

In concluding the discussion, these points were made by individual members:

- The District does not have a capacity issue but a financial issue. The District is facing a deficit of \$1.5 million in 2007-08. The budget has to be balanced. Capacity is one way to do that.
- The District can strive to address the issues raised by using the PR2 information in one swoop or integrate it as needed for issues as they are addressed over time
- Addressing capacity issues does not solve all the issues
- Disruption to student learning through implementing the scenarios would be too great to get the fiscal results needed. The PR2 process tried to answer the question, the answer was not there. At least for next year, the answer is no.
- PR2 was not totally about scenarios, there are other pieces. Their work provided the ability to make a statement to the community that the Board and District do not believe there is sufficient money being saved to do any of the scenarios but also that the work can be used to solve other issues such as, "Is there a home for Franklin?," and how that would affect other schools.

Vice Chair Rieck requested that when speaking about the PR2 Committee's work that it is spoken of as "tools" versus "scenarios."

IV. BOARD COMMUNICATION

Ms. Holmes related that Directors Donohue, Keim, and Gelser had met in the last few weeks and had developed a Communication Plan for PR2 Work. Director Donohue stated they had been looking at ways that the Board and staff could relay information regarding the resulting PR2 actions and consequences, though not limited to that topic exclusively. Director Keim added that it was crucial to have an ongoing way for the public to obtain information. A draft of their plan was distributed to Board members.

Board members made light comments and suggestions. Ms Holmes will send an electronic copy to members for feedback.

V. DELIBERATION AND NEXT STEPS

The Board requested staff provide:

- Feedback on the listed topics, where they see overlap
- A list of the current issues that need to be decided and the consequences of inaction
- Help in setting priorities
- A list of items that staff may be currently working on, such as finances
- Suggested actions to take

Director Gelser questioned whether the next meeting might be better served by rescheduling it to January instead of the week following this meeting, as planned.

Ms. Holmes suggested that the homework would be to seek clarity on identifying the question that the District is trying to answer. She agreed to provide the Board electronic copies of the flip chart lists.

Ms. Holmes, when questioned, stated she heard expressed that there would be no meeting the next week.

Vice Chair Rieck announced that the Vital Signs developed in the PR2 Committee still need to be addressed by the Board.

Chair O'Malley recapped that she had come prepared with a very unstructured process. She stated she was pleased with what the Board had accomplished that night and communication will be key. The next step will be a press release that Director Rodman will create jointly with Ms. Holmes.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Holmes was thanked for facilitating and appreciation was expressed for ending the meeting on time.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Nell O'Malley, Chair

Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent

Prepared by Jolene Shute

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