

**MINUTES**

Special Meeting of the

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Corvallis School District 509J  
 1555 SW 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Corvallis, OR 97333

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair O’Malley called the meeting to order at 10:05 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 1555 SW 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Corvallis. The secretary recorded those present as listed below.

| <u>BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT</u>   | <u>EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT</u>  |
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| Nell O’Malley, Chair<br>Kari Rieck, Vice Chair<br>Helen Higgins<br>Blake Rodman<br>Matt Donohue<br>Donna Keim<br>Sara Gelser | Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent<br>Julie Catala, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent |

**II. TAKE ACTION ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board had met in executive session preceding this meeting to hear a complaint against a staff member by Kathleen Rendich.

**Motion #48:** It was moved by Chair O’Malley and seconded by Director Higgins to deny the appeal on the grounds there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint.

Chair O’Malley continued by saying, “However, we acknowledge that this has shed light on problems that need to be addressed and we will work with the superintendent to deal with the issues of bullying, supervision, safety and welfare, and documenting and reporting.”

A summary of Director Gelser’s comments:

- ♦ She’ll deny the appeal about the specific nature about the falsification of the record.
- ♦ Her concern is about what she heard during the executive session.
- ♦ She has much respect for the student who spoke to the board during executive session.
- ♦ She believes Ms. Rendich’s complaint was about feeling unfairly treated and having her concerns minimalized.
- ♦ She was persuaded that the intent of the complaint is different than the actual complaint.
- ♦ She is sorry for what happened to the student at school.

The entire board echoed that sentiment.

**The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.**

District legal counsel Nancy Hungerford indicated that the specific complaint dealt with falsifying records. There is one document in the record; it can't be determined that there were ever any other documents that existed because there is simply no way to prove it.

A summary of board member comments:

- ♦ The SWIS report shows that the incident was a punch; that's the record that the school will keep.
- ♦ The board was alarmed by what it heard from the complainant.
- ♦ The board's requests of the superintendent probably have already put some steps into place for better documentation.
- ♦ The board wanted the record to reflect that the board wants the superintendent to look at bullying district-wide, not just at a particular school.

A summary of Kathleen Rendich's comments:

- ♦ Her son has come forward; many students wouldn't nor would their parents due to the fear of repercussions.
- ♦ She regrets that she was not advised legally how to word her complaint statement.
- ♦ She feels the board should advise parents in the future that they should consult legal counsel on how to word complaints so their hands aren't tied.
- ♦ She did the best she could in filling out the complaint form.
- ♦ It's a bitter pill.

A summary of board member comments:

- ♦ The testimony of Kathleen Rendich and her son has revealed for the board that there are serious underlying issues that need to be addressed.
- ♦ There's a genuine desire by the board to work with the superintendent to make sure this type of thing doesn't happen again; the superintendent already has committed to that.
- ♦ The board's awareness has been largely enhanced on this issue because Ms. Rendich's son came forward.
- ♦ The testimony was compelling and touched each board member.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, Chair O'Malley adjourned the meeting at 10:12 p.m.

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Kari Rieck, Chair\*

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Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent

\*Chair at the time the minutes were submitted for adoption.

Prepared by: Julie Catala

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