

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Directors - Work Session
Friday, May 12, 2006– 1:00 p.m.
Newport Recreation Center
Newport, Oregon

Minutes

PRESIDING: Ron Beck, Chairman

Present: Ron Beck, Chairman; Sue Ryan, Vice-Chairman; Jean Turner, Billie Jo Smith, Brenda Brown, Directors

Also Present: Tom Rinearson, Superintendent; Margot Helphand, Facilitator; Laurie Urquhart, Secretary

Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Ron Beck convened the meeting and called the session to order at 1:00 p.m. with a quorum of all five board members present.

Overview of the Retreat- Outcomes and Expectations

The Board reviewed the agenda; Ms. Helphand said she would like to spend about an hour working board operating policies, an hour on values and two hours on goals. Chairman Beck noted his need to leave by 5:00 p.m. to honor another commitment.

Board Operating Policies, Processes and Expectations

Ms. Helphand previously distributed 'boiler plate' **'Board and Superintendent Working Agreements'** for the Board's review; they began by discussing that document.

No one disagreed or commented on the first section, **"Purpose."** Under **"The Board Job Description,"** Mr. Rinearson noted item 3, "Evaluate The Board's own leadership and governance." He said the Board may want to address this item, as this is not something that currently occurs. Ms. Helphand said one way to make sure it happens is to schedule it.

The Board reviewed Section III, **Governance Principles.** Director Billie Jo Smith noted item 3, "Support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions." She said this needs to be defined. Ms. Helphand replied that the Board speaks with one voice. "Once you come to your viewpoint, you stay together." She added board members should avoid statements that take away from the wholeness of the board. Disagreement is acceptable; "you should have healthy discussions of the issues," said Helphand.

The Superintendent called attention to items 1 (“Focus on policy making, planning and evaluation, rather than day-to-day operations”), and 4 (“Recognize and respect the superintendent’s responsibility to manage the district and to direct employees in district matters.”). He said there were references to these items at a recent administrative meeting, and said there is confusion around this. “I don’t think it is an intentional thing,” said Rinearson. “You are a board member 24/7.”

Chairman Beck noted item 6, “Value the role we play in the community and represent the District, when possible, by attending school and community functions.” He asked “When do we take the hat off?” Ms. Helphand replied board members need to be very aware of their positions as board members.

Board members discussed school visits; most either call the principal ahead of the visit, or are invited. If issues are shared with board members during the visit, they should be directed to the Superintendent’s office.

Section IV, “**Meeting Operational Agreements**,” was discussed next. Item 6, “Cast a vote on all matters except when a conflict of interest arises.” Director Smith asked if abstaining is legal. Superintendent Rinearson said it is legal, but an abstention counts toward the majority vote.

The Board reviewed Section V, “**Communication Agreements**.” Director Turner said board members could do better on item 4, “No individual board member, regardless of their position, has the authority to speak for the Board.” Mr. Rinearson agreed that “skills could be polished” on this one.

Under “**Annual Planning and Evaluation**,” it was noted the Board does not participate in the second item, “Participate in annual self-assessment of the Board’s performance.” Board members said this should be addressed, and the working agreements being discussed could be the vehicle. Director Turner commented Board members attend available trainings.

The Superintendent said it may be a mistake in considering a school year pursuant to budgeting. “The budget needs to be based on established goals. We should be setting goals for 2007/08 in fall of 2006,” said Rinearson.

Several board members noted the need to formulate a plan under “**Orientation of New Board Members**.” The item under this heading reads: “Assure timely orientation of new Board members.” The Superintendent suggested making this a goal for the Board for the coming year. He also expressed a need to reflect on what “timely” means. “It does not make sense to describe the budget process in August,” said Rinearson.

“**Role of the Chair**.” This portion states “Recognize the role of the Chair to speak for and about the Board and to describe the Board’s process and positions. Recognize the role of the Chair to convene meetings, develop the agenda with the superintendent, and execute documents, as appropriate.”

Director Smith said it is critical the first sentence be understood. She also noted the Board has shared in public several times their de facto procedure wherein the current vice-chair succeeds the chair in the following year. The chairmanship rotates between members, so all zones are represented.

Chairman Beck noted the Chair is a figurehead; Ms. Helphand echoed this statement and said the Chair has no authority.

The Board examined the last category, “**Expectations of the Superintendent.**” Mr. Rinearson commented he has moved slower than in the past on item 3 (“Work with the Board to establish a clear vision for the district”) to make it more real.

Item 4 (prepare preliminary goals annually for the Board’s consideration) is not something Superintendent Rinearson has been asked to do. “We prepared the goals together,” said the Superintendent.

In item 7 (“Inform the Board of all critical information including relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, or critical external or internal changes”), the Board asked the word “adverse” be removed.

Superintendent Rinearson commented he does a self-assessment as noted in item 14, but said he does not share it. “If I did, it would be a good tool,” said Rinearson.

Guiding Beliefs and Values

Ms. Helphand distributed samples from other districts, and referenced the Good to Great book, and Good to Great- Social Sectors monograph. She said core values should be such that they never change, and are few in number. From the March 7 work session, she listed the following values: open, honest communication; fairness and equity; community engagement; parental choice; students in the best possible program for that student.

Helphand also reminded the Board of their work pursuant to “We believe that...”, wherein they noted “education is a shared responsibility,” and “accountability” are important.

The Board reached consensus that developing values in concert with the Baldrich core values would serve the district well. Mr. Rinearson said the core values are integrated with the categories, and said “it is like looking at a mountain from different angles.” Core values in this system are: •visionary leadership; •learning centered education; •organizational and personal learning; •valuing students, staff and partners; •agility; •focus on the future; •managing for innovation; •management by fact; •public responsibility and citizenship; •focus on results and creating value; and •systems perspective.

The group discussed each value and its meaning. The Superintendent distributed a handout describing each item. “Agility” was defined by the Board as ‘efficient responsiveness and adaptability throughout the system.’

Develop Board Goals

Ms. Helphand stated goals should be “BHAGS: Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals.” The Board examined goals established last year and accomplishments related to them, and added selected new items, as follows.

1. We will build on our strengths to improve student achievement at all levels and all populations.

- 1.1 We will develop an accurate data system that is easily understood by all stakeholders which allows us to track all classrooms, sub-groups and individual student performance. *The ESD is moving to a data warehouse which will allow the District to use the tracking it has done. The Superintendent said we should “stay the course.”*
 - 1.2 We will see an increase in student access to technology, and an increase in the appropriate use of technology in classrooms and course offerings. *Computer labs have been created or enhanced; the Technology Integration Program (TIP) has increased access.*
 - 1.3 We will support curriculum and instruction that enhances meaningful experiences for students. *Computer labs and e-learning opportunities have enhanced students’ learning experiences.*
 - 1.4 We will support staff development that is aligned to district goals. *Staff development is planned with the Continuous Improvement Plan and School Continuous Improvement Plans in mind.*
 - 1.5 (added) **We will upgrade 7-12 systems to enable students to meet graduation requirements.**
2. We will build on our strengths to improve school climate for students, staff and community.
 - 2.1 We will improve the accountability of students for their own behavior as indicated by fewer disciplinary referrals. *The district continues to implement and expand Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) in all schools. Also, administrators are working to make use of the Oregon law allowing suspension of students’ drivers licenses for certain school infractions.*
 - 2.2 We will promote in students the value of having an education, as evidenced by student feedback. *The Board discussed changing this item to “**we will create value in education in students as evidenced by better attendance.**” Parent and community involvement is emphasized.*
 - 2.3 We will strengthen the role of site councils, and increase community involvement by having at least two non-parent community members on each council. *The Board agreed this item is going well, and asked to leave it as is.*
 - 2.4 The Board will promote the development of district mission and vision that reflects the values of all the district’s communities. *The Board discussed changing this item to “**the Board will promote the development of a district mission and vision that reflects the values of all the district’s communities.**”*
 - 2.5 The Board will engage in successful labor negotiations with the licensed staff, with an outcome of positive relationships. *This item was accomplished, and is on-going.*
 3. We will build on our strengths to promote an efficient and responsive district organization.
 - 3.1 We will continue developing an accurate financial data system that fosters accurate forecasting, informs the Board, staff and community of up-to-date financial information. *The Board agreed this is a “great tool.”*
 - 3.2 We will continue monthly budget reporting to the Board. *The Board expressed great satisfaction with this item.*
 - 3.3 We will identify and pursue additional resources. *This item is ongoing, as evidenced by significant grant opportunities and constant monitoring of the budget.*

- 3.4 We will make decisions with a mindset of impact over a 5-10 year timeline, using data and research, while keeping in mind short-term impacts. *The Board discussed changing this to “We will continue to develop a long-range plan using data and research.”*
- 3.5 The Superintendent and Board will continue building their relationships as a team and will model appropriate collaborative processes. *This item is ongoing.*
- 3.6 (New) *The Board will develop and implement a self-evaluation process to evaluate our leadership and governance.*
- 3.7 (New) *The Board will develop and implement an orientation system for new board members.*

Superintendent Rinearson stated the board may want to select two or three items on which to concentrate, and said he felt 3.6 was done at the work session.

Director Smith reiterated her earlier statement that, under “Governance Principles”, item 3 (“support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions”) needs to be clearly spelled out. She expressed the viewpoint that differences of opinion should be discussed before the vote. After the vote, however, the Board’s decision should be supported publicly.

Director Turner agreed, saying “We need to support the majority by not speaking against it, even if one might personally disagree.”

Director Brown complimented Director Ryan, saying “I know it’s hard to be quiet when you do not support something.” The Superintendent suggested defining more clearly exactly what decision the Board is making at a given time.

Director Turner asked Ms. Helphand if Board members may speak as private citizens. Ms. Helphand replied “You can do it, but it is risky. The perception is different; it still sounds as if you are speaking for the Board.”

Next Steps

Superintendent Rinearson reported an idea was raised at a recent economic development conference regarding a “county education summit.” Ms. Helphand expressed excitement about the idea and said she would be happy to help, should the Board ask her. She also complimented the Board on their “high level of work” during the work session.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Chairman

Superintendent