

**LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Board of Directors – Work Session**  
**Tuesday, February 26, 2008- 6:30 p.m.**  
**Newport High School**  
**Newport, Oregon**

**Minutes**

**Presiding:** Brenda Brown, Chairman

**Present:** Brenda Brown, Chairman; Jean Turner, Vice Chairman, Ron Beck, Jana Cowan, Amy Coulter, Directors

**Also Present:** Tom Rinearson, Superintendent; Laurie Urquhart, Secretary

**Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum**

Chairman Brown convened the meeting and called the session to order at 6:40 p.m. with a quorum of all five board members present.

**Discussion on Feasibility of Offering Cultures/Comparative Religions Course**

Director Turner began the conversation by explaining Superintendent Rinearson raised the idea of a comparative cultures/religions course, due in part to recent graduates of LCSD serving in the military. She reported she taught a class on current issues last summer as part of a Masters program and picked this topic as one for debate. Students in the class selected a position, either in favor or not, and debated the subject in front of a live audience. The debate was also filmed.

Some students changed their original positions based on the work they did on the project. They noted it could be a controversial topic with the community. Several also suggested that, though a comparative cultures class has value, other classes should be added back first (especially vocational education courses). By contacting district high schools, members of the class learned that few LCSD recent graduates joined the military. Others felt all LCSD high school students should learn the information.

Chairman Brown noted the debate was a good one, and said she could see both sides. She voiced her support of offering a class such as this, as “the more you know about the world around you, the better off we all are.” She felt it should be an elective course.

Portions of comparative cultures information is currently taught as part of social studies curriculum. Chairman Brown noted that teacher preparation for teaching a course on comparative cultures should be focused. Ms. Turner reported she asked her Masters students if this subject matter is already covered in existing curriculum. Their response was that it is inadequate and depends upon the teacher.

Director Beck noted today’s “flat world,” and said only three in ten of our students are eligible for the military. He commented his preference in seeking ways to enrich students would be to have them take additional classes in economics or social systems as “religions have been fighting since the beginning of time.”

Director Cowan disagreed, saying one had to look beyond world economics to the underlying driver of religion. Superintendent Rinearson noted the origination of several major religions in the same small geographic area.

Director Coulter suggested offering a “hot topics” class on current issues, done in a debate setting. Director Cowan asked how such a class would fit with curriculum alignment. Board members noted the class could be an elective designed within Oregon standards.

Mr. Beck noted his agreement with having additional offerings and said he would like to “provide the tools to challenge the young mind.” The Superintendent suggested continuing the conversation, but shifting it into the teacher group working on curriculum alignment. “It could take us two or three years to get it imbedded, but then it would be sustainable,” said Rinearson. He also asked the Board to consider students having a foreign experience during their tenure in LCSD.

Director Turner reiterated the thought that all five board members support the idea of trying to find a way to teach comparative cultures/religions, and suggested the Board then turn it back to the Superintendent.

Director Cowan noted the importance of being sensitive to the community’s response.

### **Information Sharing, Quality Conference**

Board members Jean Turner, Jana Cowan and Amy Coulter traveled to the national Quality conference held in November, 2007 and provided information to the remaining Board members regarding their experience. Director Coulter said she learned that providing classes such as the “hot topics” she mentioned earlier is an example of what she experienced; “we need to move in the direction of what kids want” and make sure they are getting the things they need to learn, said Coulter.

Director Cowan noted the need to “keep up with the times and listen,” and expressed her agreement with the focus on student accountability. Superintendent Rinearson stated “quality” is about meeting or exceeding expectations.

Director Turner expressed her desire for all Board members to attend the Quality conference, and said staff collaboration is an important focus of the training. She said the system began with “Baldrich” concepts and was expanded to education.

Director Beck shared some of his experience during prior Quality travel to Pinellas County, Florida. He said District staff visited three schools and the District Office there to “see it in action.” He said expectations are set at a high level, with endless possibilities. He mentioned a school that focused on both culinary arts and veterinary medicine. Students in that district may attend any school in the district, with transportation provided by the district.

Chairman Brown said she sees the community liaison piece expanding and stressed its importance. Ms. Coulter stated communication with the community about the great things happening in schools is key.

### **Discussion on Feasibility of High School Seniors Taking Exit Exams**

Chairman Brown shared research she gathered regarding exit exams for high school seniors. Currently, 24 states require them, with a 25<sup>th</sup> in process. She said rather than an exit exam, she would like to see

seniors do a senior project. She presented one from Forks, Washington she felt was especially good, and said she thought this approach would be more beneficial for students.

Director Turner noted Waldport High seniors do a project likely tied to Career Related Learning Standards (CRLE). The Superintendent said projects such as those were tied to CIM requirements in the past, and said there may be a way to tie senior projects to the student's education plan, beginning in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Director Beck suggested selecting the best projects and presenting them to the community to demonstrate what is occurring in our schools and that "we are turning out quality students."

Ms. Brown said all her research demonstrated that Oregon content standards are good, though assessment tests do not measure the standards. She noted the importance of continuing the curriculum alignment project.

The Superintendent raised the notion of doing away with credits and going to a proficiency model. Taft Assistant Principal Julie Lafayette is well versed in this model; Mr. Rinearson suggested having her address the Board on this topic in a work session setting. He asked the Board to think about what the district could look like with no social promotion and no retention.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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Chairman

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Superintendent