

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Directors – Work Session
Sunday, July 27, 2008, 4:00 p.m.-7:30 pm.
Monday, July 28, 2008- 8:30 a.m.– 4:00 p.m.
WorldMark Resort
Gleneden Beach, Oregon

Minutes

Presiding: Chairman Jean Turner

Present: Chairman Jean Turner; Vice-Chairman Jana Cowan; Ron Beck (present on Monday, July 28); Brenda Brown, Amy Coulter

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

Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum

Board Chairman Jean Turner convened the meeting and called the session to order at 5:25 p.m. with a quorum of four board members present (Director Beck was excused on Sunday, July 27, but was present for the entire Monday session, July 28).

Discussion on Setting the Work Session Agenda

At the last regular session, the Board was asked to submit topics for discussion at the work session. During this agenda item at the work session, the Board reached consensus to discuss:

- 1) 07/08 Board Self Evaluation
- 2) Facilities Planning/Construction Excise Tax
- 3) Communications
- 4) Superintendent Evaluation Form
- 5) 08/09 Board Goals

They reached consensus to begin the Monday session at 8:30 a.m., have lunch at noon, and try to conclude the meeting by 4:00 p.m. Superintendent Rinearson asked if the Board would develop outcomes during the sessions; Chairman Turner responded they would be setting Board goals. District goals need to be developed in September/October of the year prior to their implementation to allow budgeting aligned with the goals.

The Superintendent noted he would like to discuss the Board chairmanship position, perhaps under the Board's self evaluation, and raised the idea of maintaining Board chairs for more than one year consecutively. Director Turner said some may see the chairmanship as a position demanding additional work, and that there could be board members who do not wish to be Chair. Director Cowan stated continuity would be a good thing and said she did not feel prepared to take on that role at this time, though that could change. Superintendent Rinearson said many Board chairs in other districts do a two-year chairmanship.

Board members brainstormed other possible discussions for the coming day, including having sustainability/energy as a board goal (Director Brown); visiting schools (from Director Coulter); using music to teach (from Director Coulter); the importance of multiplication tables (Director Turner); the importance of hiring the right people (Director Cowan), social retention and promotion (Superintendent Rinearson), recognizing and acknowledging student achievement (Superintendent Rinearson); receiving information directly from schools, including school newsletters and calendars (Director Cowan).

The Sunday session was recessed at 6:40 p.m., when the Board went to dinner.

Monday, July 28, 2008- 8:30 a.m.

The Board began the Monday session by discussing the **Board Chairmanship**, and doing a **Board self evaluation**.

Board Chair. The Board discussed their past practice of rotating the Chairman position each year, with the Vice-Chair succeeding the Chair. The Vice-Chair has changed each year in a rotation by zone. Three board positions will be up for renewal in 2009. Chairman Turner asked the Board to consider changing from past practice to allow a Chair to continue in that role for more than one year, if the Board so elects them. Superintendent Rinearson reminded the Board of the Chair's role of running the meetings and being the Board spokesperson. Director Brown suggested having a new Vice-Chair each year. After discussing the issue, the Board reached consensus to "give themselves permission" to continue with the same Chairman for more than one year, though Board officer elections must occur annually, by law. Mr. Rinearson noted they need to consider board members' skill set, both for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. The primary job of the Vice-Chair is mentoring new board members, said the Superintendent.

Board Self Evaluation. The Board used the "Board and Superintendent Working Agreements" to do a self evaluation (please see that document, an attachment to these minutes, with ratings for each line item noted). Summarized comments for each section follow.

II. The board job description. Director Brown noted her opinion the District is doing well with regard to legal accountability, but said she would like more clarity regarding what is included in the budget. She said the budget is evolving and getting better, with graphs and area reports.

Director Beck said the Budget is transparent, as it should be. Director Coulter said the Board could communicate better as a Board, adding this is an area for growth. Mr. Beck noted Board communications will always be difficult, given public meeting laws. He said past Chairman Doug Hunt would call board members prior to the meeting to ask if they had questions on any issues. The Board expressed consensus they would appreciate this kind of activity. Mr. Beck also noted he typically directs patrons to the building principals for information.

III. Governance Principles. Chairman Turner noted that "you are always a board member." Part of this section has to do with the superintendent's responsibility to manage the district and to direct employees in district matters. The Superintendent commented that "the best compliment is that the DO folks don't think about you very much." He said the old culture of employees' "edginess" around Board members will take time to dissipate. He also noted the Board as a whole does well with regard to this item, though occasionally individual board members cross the line. "It is fine to ask questions, but if

you are seeking additional reports on something, go through Laurie or I and we will work with the pertinent individuals to get the information,” said Rinearson.

The last bullet under this section relating to Board members’ attendance at school and community functions, caught the attention of Director Cowan. “I would go to more, if I knew about them,” she noted. Director Beck said he obtains school information from the respective website, while Chairman Turner said her information comes from the school secretary.

IV. Meeting Operational Agreements. The Board rated most items in this section at the highest level. The only one lower than that is requesting items be placed on the agenda, which three board members rated ‘thumbs up’ and two rated ‘neutral.’

V. Communication Agreements. The Board’s ratings on their performance was mixed on this item. Two members said they communicate with the Superintendent or Board Secretary. Director Coulter noted that the line item dealing with communicating one-on-one with the Superintendent or other board member when an individual concern arises could be “where we could get divided.”

VI. Annual Planning and Evaluation. All ratings in this section were ‘thumbs up.’ Amy Coulter said she appreciated the portion of the Superintendent’s evaluation when the Board and Superintendent noted they could always do better.

VII. Orientation of New Board members. All rated this category ‘thumbs up.’ Chairman Turner stated orientation of new board members was made the responsibility of the Vice Chair. Director Cowan said this had been “awesome” for her, and said she appreciated meeting District Office staff. She suggested this occur annually. Superintendent Rinearson agreed it could be useful to repeat after a board member’s first year.

The conversation moved to determining how the Board could express appreciation for DO staff. Director Cowan agreed to coordinate an appreciation-type event some time in September, perhaps a barbecue on the DO roof.

Superintendent Rinearson commented he would like to generate future superintendents for the district from within.

VIII. Role of the Chair. All ratings were positive.

IX. Expectations of the Superintendent. Superintendent Rinearson noted monthly meetings with Board members have ‘slipped.’ Board members reached consensus that these meetings are valued and they would like them to continue.

Director Cowan commented she sometimes seeks additional data in order to make decisions, as with the Insight School contract. She said several of her questions were not specifically answered, and said she felt she was receiving a ‘pat on the head’ at times. Chairman Turner said she recognized what Ms. Cowan went through, but “on the other side are time constraints.”

Director Coulter said she would have liked to be on the interview committee for the new assistant principal at Taft, but was called the day before the interview.

Facilities Planning/Construction Excise Tax. Director Beck asked if money generated from the CET would stay in that area; it will not necessarily do so. Director Brown said she went to two of the community meetings, which were fairly well attended.

The Superintendent noted the importance of dialog between he, Rich Belloni and interested patrons/businesses. Ms. Brown said there is greater understanding now of the tax, and recognition of the fact that revenue from this source will not be enough to build a school. Superintendent Rinearson agreed, saying a new high school could cost between \$20 to \$30 million.

Director Coulter commented “We are building trust now.” Chairman Turner noted the district is in declining enrollment, and asked how that would affect the possibility of building a new high school. Mr. Rinearson noted one needs approximately 3500 students for a comprehensive high school. He also noted conversations around the county during the next two years should let us know what projects should be included on a potential bond issuance.

The board broke for lunch at 12:25 p.m., and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Communications. The Board began the discussion by talking about their visits to schools. Director Coulter reported she wears a “visitor” badge when she visits; other Board members wear their board identification badges when they do so. Mr. Beck reiterated they are always seen as board members, whether or not they are in an official meeting.

The Superintendent noted that Board member visits to schools are grey areas. Board policy states they need to obtain permission from the Board to go on official visits as a board member. “If people ask you to do official board business, you need to say you need permission to do so.”

Director Brown noted it is important for Board members not to make promises or commitments. Jana Cowan stated it is clear they must use common sense, but said it is not always clear what board members should and should not do. “Just do you best,” advised Ms. Turner.

Director Cowan said she would like more communication directly from the schools in her area. Director Beck expressed his opinion regarding board members’ direct involvement with statewide school advocate groups. “It is tricky. There is no actual conflict of interest, just the perception of one.”

Director Brown asked for more communication between the D.O. and the Board, citing the recent D.O. remodel as a case in point. “I would like to know more about project kinds of things,” said Brown. The Superintendent responded the remodel was not planned in advance, but took place after an inspection of inside walls there. Chairman Turner said sometimes “things slip by. It is in Tom’s like of authority; it is OK.” Ms. Brown noted her preference for discussing items like this during the development of the budget.

Superintendent’s Evaluation Form. The superintendent evaluation form used by the Board the last few years was developed by OSBA. Director Brenda Brown noted much of the form does not apply to the Board, and said another board sought help from OSBA to develop a new form.

Director Beck said he likes the current form as it provides the Superintendent with the criteria to be used for his evaluation. Mr. Rinearson said input is provided to the Board by having Learning Support Team and other administrators complete the evaluation form. Ms. Brown said “one of our stated duties is to evaluate the superintendent. I would almost like to do our own, then get their input.” Chairman Turner said she values seeing the Superintendent’s input, as well as that of his direct reports. “That is data I want to use; I treat it very seriously,” said Turner.

Director Cowan said she is somewhere in the middle on this issue. Director Coulter said, after competing one evaluation form, she is ready to move forward with it again. Director Beck said he felt it should be used for the next evaluation cycle, at least.

Ms. Cowan noted each evaluation item is broken down, except board goals. Director Beck suggested obtaining forms from the cities of Newport and Lincoln City, the PUD and one or two others to see what other entities use. Mr. Rinearson asked what an evaluation process that works look like, and suggested the Board develop a descriptor for each rating (i.e., what a ‘five’ looks like, etc).

Chairman Turner asked about next steps; Director Brown said she would like to set examining the form and describing the ratings as a board goal. Tom suggested he and Chairman Turner work on the descriptors, returning them to the Board for their reaction when completed.

Mr. Rinearson said the system that will be developed should deal with adverse actions, but must also work with the “care and feeding” of the superintendent so they stay around.

2008/09 Board Goals

Director Turner read notes shared by Board members earlier in the retreat pursuant to board goals:

- hopes to include outcomes;
- discussion on sustainability/energy/green building;
- how the Board recognizes and acknowledges student achievement;
- school reports not area reports.

Board members began discussing ways to recognize **student achievement** of varying sorts. Director Coulter stated her goal is to change the culture at schools by emphasizing student achievement. Superintendent Rinearson agreed that it is important to create an environment in which recognition can happen. He suggested narrowing the focus to begin the process, and asked how the Board would feel about having **two areas on which to concentrate: •mastery of multiplication tables at the elementary level; and •achievements of some sort in physical education.**

The Superintendent also suggested the Board read “**Punishment by Rewards,**” and discuss it over the course of two or three work sessions.

Board members discussed ways to ensure students learn multiplication tables by the sixth grade at the latest, and asked the Superintendent their role in assuring that happen. He said the Board could develop a policy wherein students are not allowed to enter sixth grade until they master multiplication tables. Director Beck expanded on this idea, saying the board could consider establishing requirements by grade level, and said students could demonstrate proficiency.

Director Cowan raised the issue of the student who reaches proficiency early, and said proficiency and grades do not match. The Superintendent noted the board could have a school pilot such a program.

Board members next raised the idea of uniforms, and of exploring the feasibility of having **uniform dress codes**. The superintendent asked the Board to consider the problem they are trying to solve, so they will be prepared to respond to questions from the public. Chairman Turner suggested they have a goal of gathering information on this issue, with a work session to be scheduled to hear results in early 2009.

Director Brown asked if staff could do the research; Mr. Rinearson replied it may be a matter of staff asking “what would the Board like us to take off our plate?” He noted this could be an example of why changing goals each year is unproductive (by changing the focus). He said staff involved in Level Q may be able to take this on.

Director Beck said he would like to look at **credit by proficiency, and what affect that thinking could have on our high schools**. The Superintendent responded that Taft High is looking at piloting this method by using a proficiency coach. He said he felt this could have more impact than exploring uniforms.

Board members noted the need to retain the goal on **Taft High’s academic eligibility project**, and said examining the **Superintendent’s evaluation form** should be a goal for this year.

Director Brown said she would like to continue the goal of **increasing rigor and raising expectations**. She also would like to explore the idea of requiring a **senior project**. Superintendent Rinearson noted Waldport High requires senior projects at present, while Newport High’s site council considered them for some time then rejected the idea.

The Superintendent reminded the Board of the upcoming legislative session, which could impact their work, as well as potential bargaining with one of the employee unions.

Director Brown raised two possibilities for goals for the 09/10 year: energy/sustainability, and an examination of district properties to determine if those assets are being used to their greatest potential.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 p.m. on Monday, July 28, 2008.

Chairman

Superintendent