

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 7:00 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 Sara Gelser Blake Rodman Matt Donohue Donna Keim</p> <p><u>STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT</u> Lynn Hector, Corvallis High School</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT</u> Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent Jim Hogeboom, Assistant Superintendent Mary McKay, Student Services Director Jeanne Holmes, Human Resources Director</p>
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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.

III. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS/UPDATES

Board members Rodman, Higgins, and Donohue each reported on different sessions they had attended at the recent annual Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) meeting in Portland. Director Rodman spoke to creating a culture that does not let students not succeed. Director Higgins spoke to how emotional reactions makes cultures or

individuals resistant to change and learned some key points in managing change, something she found very appropriate for this district and very inspiring. Director Donohue spoke to the Klamath School District bringing in a consultant to help them develop their strategic plan. This supplied the framework against which they could test new ideas, providing them additional courage in their decision making.

Director Gelser reported that following on some events of last spring there was interest in creating opportunities for the Latino community to convey their needs to the District. Recently, a forum was held for that purpose with about 30 people in attendance. Simultaneous translation was available wherein English speakers wore headsets and the entire meeting was in Spanish. Questions asked of the community were: What is working well, what are your challenges and your concerns, and what are your dreams for your students. There was a lot of enthusiasm for the meeting. She was surprised at the number of safety questions and there seemed to be a lack of information about basic scheduling requirements. The group wanted to meet again.

Director Rieck reported that she, Director Rodman, and Human Resources Director Jeanne Holmes had held a forum for the Latino community regarding the work of the Program and Resource Review (PR2) Committee. They used a translator and found it incredibly difficult to say a few things at a time taking extra effort to use accurate words for correct interpretation and then waiting for the translator to relay the information. They are hoping to set up a Latino point person to distribute information in each of the schools with larger Latino populations. The group experienced good feedback.

Director Gelser expressed that she felt there was real promise in simultaneous translation. She had talked with the Council for Developmental Disabilities who would let the District borrow headsets. She could also locate a list of simultaneous translators.

Director Kiem reported on her recent meetings as a representative to the Oregon School Activities Association. The Association just finished outlining their plan to create six classifications beginning in the 2006-07 school year, up from the previous four classifications. This was done to achieve a more competitive balance between schools. She is serving on the championship committee which has discussed the number of participating teams, equity between men and women, and the fact that two sports pay for all the other championships. Most everyone else on the committee is an athletic director. There are some superintendents but she is the only board member. Her exposure to the work of the PR2 Committee enabled her to pass on process insights to the OSAA committee.

IV. PREPARATION FOR PROGRAM AND RESOURCE REVIEW (PR2) COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair O'Malley announced that the PR2 Committee would be handing over their work to the Board next week on November 28 and she wished to know what additional

information members needed to know to help them in their decision making. She added that there may be times in the next few months when they change their minds and she asked them to refrain from drawing conclusions until the process was complete.

Board discussion became varied not so much on what information was needed but the process the board would take to enable them to reach decisions and whether a fuller process was needed that included the community's wishes for the number of desired configurations such as K-8 schools or core knowledge.

Superintendent Tarzian stated that while the PR2 Committee spent eight months reviewing the District and its possible reconfigurations, they would be the first to say that they deliberately did not talk about two things: education and values. Those were seen as the work of the Board. She referred to the opposing root values named at the recent OSBA convention of community, liberty, prosperity, and equity that affect choices. She stated that part of the reason she wanted to be the superintendent in Corvallis was to find the values of the constituents beyond providing basic education. She stated that the Board will have the opportunity to ask questions when they receive the handoff from the PR2 Committee and the following week, December 5, they would hear an updated budget review and forecast along with recommendations for the remaining bond dollars. She stated that the PR2 Committee has been respected for soliciting community input. She recently told the Leadership Team (school principals and central administrators) that no one is responsible for the related ideas and questions so now is the time to ask them. She said she was not sure that the answer to the question being sought was in the PR2 notebook but that the tools were there.

The Board grappled with their objective in reviewing the District's school configurations. The objective was tied to limited finances, recent levy loss, the District's strategic plan (the required State Continuous Improvement Plan along with the District's Improvement Plan), and the ability to align with an educational configuration vision which reflected the desires of the community.

Concern was raised that setting up a process prior to hearing all the information might limit the Board's discussions. It was noted that the PR2 Committee did not have a vision of creating the Vital Signs and Decision-making Flow Chart when it began but rather those developed as the need for them became clear in discussions. It was suggested that the Board's discussions be arranged after hearing all the information.

Concern was also raised that time constraints may not allow enough time for ideas to surface and conversely that the lack of revenue needs to be dealt with on its own as the values discussion could spin for a long time.

It was suggested that the upcoming budget report include the District's past revenue picture and its repercussions back to 1990.

Requests were also made that more information would be appreciated on the:

- Educational efficacy of PR2 scenarios from staff
- Exact amount of remaining bond dollars, what has yet to be done as part of Phase I of the Long-Range Facilities Master Plan (includes three phases), and lingering projects that were not included in Phase I as it was estimated that not enough money would be available for them at the time the Plan was developed
- Budget forecast under the standard state allocation model and what would have happened if the State's (Minnis') plan of 51% (of Personal Income Tax collections) funding K-12 education had been passed.
- Superintendent's views, which generated another full discussion summarized below

While Board members valued Superintendent Tarzian's input regarding the possible changes in the District, concern was raised over the Board having to choose whether or not to align itself with her opinion once it was heard. Rather than having a formal recommendation from the superintendent, it was suggested that her views be heard in a more collaborative way right along with the Board's discussions.

Board members made the following points:

- Uncomfortable with a formal superintendent's recommendation. The PR2 is a Board committee that specifically was requested not to make recommendations. The Board needs to make the decision. A formal recommendation puts the superintendent on the spot to recommend scenarios that the Board would have to support or not.
- Think it is crucial that have recommendation from superintendent and can do that without making her a scapegoat. District has super superintendent. Have been gathering information from public, teachers, parents, etc. and if leave her out, something is wrong.
- If the Board did not go along with superintendent's recommendation, for example to close a school, it could irreparably harm her relationship with that school
- Would rather disagree with any board member than Superintendent Tarzian. Important to hear her opinion along with all district staff.
- Underlying message is that all have respect for Superintendent Tarzian. She is the educational expert hired. Not comfortable empowering the Board as to how it makes its decisions without asking her. Maybe she would like to state her recommendations.

Superintendent Tarzian responded:

- The State of Oregon does not allow a district to run without a superintendent or a board so she and they are in this together.
- Have expressed concerns to PR2 Committee Chair and Board Chair that some scenarios would be difficult to carry out given the time and money constraints.

- This is the Board's decision to make, though she encourages them to require that she make a recommendation, a pretty traditional district/superintendent governance.

When queried whether any Board members had ever voted against a superintendent's recommendation, several raised their hands. This led Director Gelsler to declare that the Board would be able to vote against the superintendent's recommendation, if needed. She added that it did not matter what Superintendent Tarzian's opinion was called as long as the Board would know what she would do, that it is written, and that she explain why she chose the recommendation.

Superintendent Tarzian stated that she wanted to hear the Board's discussions and that she was the person fiscally responsible for this district so the same Board concerns also apply to her.

Chair O'Malley called a break at 8:52 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:58 p.m.

Chair O'Malley summarized what she had captured from the discussion. The Board would like:

- Superintendent Tarzian's input all along the way
- Flexibility to accept or not Superintendent Tarzian's recommendations
- To collect staff input prior to winter break
- More community input
- Freedom from process to roll up sleeves, not to be mired in process
- Revenue impacts, history since 1990
- Bond information related to remaining dollars

Chair O'Malley added that she would make a timeline to get the process done by January 30.

It was discussed that gathering staff and more community input prior to the holidays would be difficult and members should wait until that has been obtained prior to studying the whole picture.

Discussion ensued about what PR2 related information to add to the already full scheduled December 12 board retreat. When considering bumping items from the agenda to accommodate, a caution was provided from Chair O'Malley that every time an issue gets delayed it can domino, postponing the issues that follow so the whole year needs to be kept in mind. Chair O'Malley suggested that the December 12 meeting be called a work session and begin at 6 p.m.

Director Gelsler stated that most of the public communication would occur after the holidays as the process to address the PR2 information is not known at this point and time

would be at a premium. Superintendent Tarzian recommended a weekly press release to begin soon and a mailing to the community when the number of scenarios is narrowed. Director Rieck noted that parent groups are including information in their school newsletters.

V. ADJOURNED

Being no further business, Chair O'Malley adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Nell O'Malley, Chair

Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent

Prepared by Jolene Shute

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