

**School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon  
Study Session of December 2, 2014**

**INFORMAL MINUTES**

A Study Session of the Board of Directors came to order at 6:07pm at the call of Co-Chair Pam Knowles in the Board Auditorium at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon Street, Portland, OR, 97227

There were present:

Board of Directors:

Pam Knowles, Co-Chair  
Ruth Adkins, Co-Chair  
Bobbie Regan  
Matt Morton  
Tom Koehler  
Greg Belisle  
Steve Buel

Student Representative:

Minna Jayaswal - *absent*

Staff:

Carole Smith, Superintendent  
Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Office

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kara Colley stated that she lives in the Chapman neighborhood and that she does not support any Enrollment and Transfer proposal that breaks up families. She asked the Board to keep the sibling preference in place. It feels like the District wants to break the rules now and it felt like a breach of trust.

Jerry Eaton, teacher at Meek, reported that there were tangible items that Meek needed. He had a 20% increase in IEP students this year, and they are lacking wraparound services. They do not have art or music and they lack diversity. Meek also needs more computers, more space and community supports.

Kat Caskey commented that she was a high school dropout from Franklin and that education was not one size fits all. It wasn't until she enrolled in Portland Youth Builders, an alternative high school in Southeast Portland, which changed her life. Their focus is on job readiness.

Adonis Lomu stated that he was at Jefferson for two years and had less than a 1.0 gpa. He stated that he was never motivated until he enrolled in Alliance at Meek. It was a fresh start for him and helped him socially. He plans to go to college and major in psychology and currently has a 4.0 gpa at Meek. He will be the first in his immediate family to attend college.

Daniella Hernandez spoke of her experience with the Teen Parent Program. They provide daycare and counseling. She has been attending Alliance at Meek for the last three years. She struggled a lot through her education, but now she sees a big future ahead of her due to Meek. Meek works with you one-on-one.

Travon Braswell, a senior at Mt. Scott, stated that Mt. Scott taught him to balance his home and school life. The smaller school put him at ease. He is now working on scholarships to attend college, and he would like to open his own barber shop. Being able to have bonds with teachers has taught him to be confident.

## **DISCUSSION: ENROLLMENT AND TRANSFER POLICY**

Director Koehler stated that the public has asked for the model that staff was running and has stated that we have not been able to give it to them. That model should be transparent and replicated for all focus option schools. Judy Brennan, Director of Enrollment and Transfer, indicated that the methodology that was used was online and that the results from the modeling have also been posted to date. Co-Chair Adkins commented that that was not a good use of staff time; she wants to look at how we would implement the new policy. The key piece was getting alignment with our Racial Educational Equity Policy.

Director Regan commented that some of her colleagues speak as if their truth is the only truth in the room. She did not know why one person has say over the other's requests. If Director Koehler wants additional information, he should receive it. Director Regan stated that under the new policy scope, it says it does not apply to charter school admissions and she hoped that we would have an inclination to go to the state to ask them when we do our lottery, that our charter schools follow that process. Secondly, she has asked for a few years if someone applies to a school outside their neighborhood, but then does not like it, we say they cannot go back to their neighborhood school for a year. Director Regan asked what policy contains that rule. A student should always have the right to go to their neighborhood school. Lastly, she would like to see the standard criteria for the petition process. Ms. Brennan responded that staff was putting together a packet of information for the Board on the petition process and would be prepared to discuss that the following week. Director Regan also requested information on why the District went with a lottery process in the first place.

Director Koehler questioned if the Board would have a detailed petition process the following week. Ms. Brennan responded that staff will provide some context, how it works now, and the modifications coming forward. Director Koehler commented that the Board spends a lot of time discussing things that do not necessarily make school great. Was there a paradigm where choice and equity are not opposed to each other but are catalytic to each other? That is the paradigm he would prefer to live in. He did not want to pit siblings against equity. Director Koehler added that SACET members have expressed concerns about our process to date and asked what if the District lifted the enrollment cap on Benson and provided students more choices across the District. Benson has the best graduation rate. The District was out of step with the boundary review process and how it is linked to enrollment and transfer. He felt it would be better to do both items at the same time. Superintendent Smith concurred that the two processes were very connected, and she felt doing the policy changes first would give us information on what boundaries to move.

Co-Chair Adkins stated that she did not see it as choice and equity being opponents; she saw it as placing equity into our choice process. Superintendent Smith agreed; she did not see them being pitted against each other. Director Koehler commented that if we could not keep families together and increase opportunities then they all should resign from the Board. We were not using the equity lens with keeping the enrollment cap on Benson. We were looking at every little school as opposed to the entire system. Director Regan stated that what killed our neighborhood schools was not Benson but the federal government and the flawed No Child Left Behind Act. Co-Chair Adkins commented that she believes the Superintendent's recommendations has both choice and equity; we are using the equity lens and applying it to our policies and procedures. Co-Chair Adkins stated that she supported the recommendations.

Director Buel stated that he was disappointed in the public process around enrollment and transfer. The listening session at Jefferson was the best he has seen in years. Director Buel added that he could not learn anything new unless he has conversations. Director Buel questioned the rules for the dual language immersion programs and how it was determined as to who gets enrolled. Ms. Brennan responded that most of the immersion programs have four different sets of slots: those who live in the neighborhood and those who are divided by students who speak the target language or native language. There were slots for students who live in other areas that have priority, and those slots are divided by native or English speakers. If there is a sibling already in the program, the sibling's name goes to the top of the appropriate bucket. Director Buel commented that he was leaning toward voting for the SACET recommendations with a couple exceptions. But if neighborhood schools are to become the system by which we

populate our schools, then we can no longer continue as business as usual. We need to support the schools in a manner that makes them better. We can no longer be compliance oriented, but school oriented. We can no longer spend \$14 million on consultants. We can no longer dally when parents are unhappy with their school. We must get the librarians and reading specialists in the schools and we must build a solid educational foundation. We need to focus on our schools and not ourselves, meaning his Board members.

Co-Chair Knowles mentioned that the only reason she is on the Board is because she cares about children. She considers letters she receives and tries to make the best decision possible. The entire Board is dedicated to our students. The petition process is at the top of her list and she wants to make sure it is unbiased and fair. She wondered how we were going to get free or reduced lunch students to apply and she would like to see what the marketing will look like. And once they apply, one barrier is the school welcoming to culturally different students? What are we going to do to make sure our schools are welcoming to the students we want to go there? We need to perform a check and balance on it each year and that language needs to be in the resolution. We want to be able to make amendments if we need to.

### **PRESENTATION: COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

Sharie Lewis, Director of Accounting and Payroll, introduced Cheryl Anselone and David Schick who helped assemble the CAFR. The Single Audit Report was also in the Board's packet. Ms. Lewis announced that there were no findings this year on the District's internal controls. The District was in Good Standing. The auditors will attend the Board meeting the following week and at that time, staff will ask the Board to approve the financial statements in their totality.

Director Buel questioned if the District could also do a summary budget in addition to the budget required by law. Ms. Lewis responded yes, and that staff was looking at different ways to provide a budget for the public to understand.

### **UPDATE: MULTIPLE PATHWAYS**

Korinna Wolfe, Senior Director of Alternative Education, stated that the purpose of the presentation was to give an understanding of the depths and breadths that Multiple Pathways serves. Multiple Pathways provide wraparound services to various schools and programs, and that included prevention, intervention and re-engagement.

Director Morton asked, in regards to reconnection services, what role our community partners played in that. Carla Gay, Vice-Principal at the Reconnection Center, responded that outreach coordinators have been added, and they knock on doors to get kids back into school. They also coordinate with CBO's and Juvenile Justice and attend task force meetings to connect with those partnerships.

Director Regan questioned why MLC was an alternative school and not a focus school. Ms. Wolfe responded that the primary purpose for Alliance is drop-out recovery; MLC is an alternative school by nature as they have the same category per Oregon Statute. Director Regan asked what the greatest need was for Alternative Education. Ms. Wolfe responded that wraparound supports, staffing and more fte would be their greatest need, and it would be nice to start building back to previous levels. The largest need is that they do not have enough seats for the students in alternative schools.

At 9:03pm, Co-Chair Knowles called for a five minute break.

## **UPDATE: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Greg Wolleck, Program Director, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Joe LaFontaine, Funded Programs Senior Director, described how Indestar works and added that the state has been using Indestar for four years. All schools have codes for their programs. The codes will be available to the public for transparency. The Indestar software program was given to all school districts from ODE. School Improvement Plans were drafted once a year in the fall but were difficult to monitor and the content was difficult to review. They were not coherent from one year to the next.

Director Belisle asked how we imagined incorporating our partners into this. Mr. LaFontaine responded that he did not know what the tool would look like, but partners would be involved. Co-Chair Knowles commented that she was surprised that stakeholders were coming into the program late. Mr. Wolleck assured her that family and community involvement was utilized. Director Regan stated that the new tool sounds very positive, but was also concerned about parents and the site council process.

Director Buel questioned who owned the Indestar program. Mr. Wolleck responded that the tool was developed by an institute in Illinois. The Oregon Department of Education adopted it and was requiring it for many schools. The software has been customized for PPS and ODE pays for it. The state requires it for all title schools and will eventually move to all our schools.

Director Morton mentioned that the new Climate Survey will be rolled out next year and he was curious at how the multiple layers will play out. He is hearing that, as a tool, it can be used consistently across staff and the school community and is worthwhile so far. How will we layer new stakeholder information that comes in and how good of a tool is this for accountability on a school level? Mr. LaFontaine responded that at the school level, it was very easy to use. One could change the course of the work with this tool. You can delete future tasks and create new tasks as the work needs to be changed.

## **FIRST READING: AMENDED CASH MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Barbara Gibbs, Senior Treasury manager, stated that before the Board was an amendment Cash Management Policy that the Board will vote on each year at the same time the Board votes on the CAFR. Tonight would be a first reading of the amendment policy, with the second reading and vote to occur on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADJOURN**

Co-Chair Knowles adjourned the meeting at 10:07pm.

Submitted by:

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Caren Huson-Quiniones, Senior Specialist  
PPS Board of Education