

**School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon
Board Retreat of July 26, 2018**

INFORMAL MINUTES

A Retreat of the Board of Directors came to order at 9:00am at the call of Chair Rita Moore in Room GRW 310 in the Library at Concordia University, 2811 NE Holman Street, Portland, Oregon, 97211.

There were present:

Board of Directors:

Rita Moore, Chair
Julie Esparza Brown, Vice-Chair
Paul Anthony
Scott Bailey
Julia Brim-Edwards
Amy Kohnstamm
Mike Rosen

Staff:

Guadalupe Guerrero, Superintendent
Yvonne Curtis, Deputy Superintendent Instruction
Claire Hertz, Deputy Superintendent Business
Stephanie Soden, Chief of Staff
Rosanne Powell, Board Manager

Facilitator:

Dr. Lee Vargas

Welcome

Chair Moore welcomed everyone and introduced the facilitator for the day, Lee Vargas. Dr. Vargas commented that if the Board wants to get better, that they have to get different. Success and leadership was a team sport and the Board needed a “North Star” to keep them focused.

Discussion of Board Evaluation

Board members were asked to provide input on their work in the past year.

Director Rosen: Board meetings run long, but felt the Board was working on the right stuff. They moved through many issues this past year in a thorough way and completed the updates of important policies.

Director Anthony: the most successful effort was hiring the Superintendent. In addition, the last year was spent focusing on the problems of adults and not children.

Chair Moore: the Board had to deal with the problems of adults first as that is what has been plaguing the District. One example would be senior staff, and also the issue of Pioneer and the needs of the adults. Overall, she thought the Board was good at keeping their eyes on the big priorities. Chair Moore added that the way information is presented to the Board was impacting their decision-making, and she would like to see staff do an actual analysis of each topic presented to the Board.

Director Brim-Edwards: the Board focused on operations and processes, getting the Board work organized, and then doing the work. Board differences were utilized in getting a better outcome. Again, for her, she would like to know what the essential question is of each agenda topic and an explanation as to why they were receiving the information or having a discussion. If there is a decision to be made, there is no recommendation from staff.

Vice-Chair Esparza Brown: more was accomplished the past year than her two prior years on the Board. The Board came together around equity issues, and interpreters were available at all Board meetings. Their focus was more on policies this past year and she hopes that continues this year. The Board moved a lot of work.

Director Bailey: in terms of policy, the next step is to be more systemic and determine what policies we will take on this year and the next, and we need to monitor the implementation of policies. Also, we do not have an accountability system for site councils at the schools. Middle Schools were a big thing for the Board last year, and we gave the initial push which was an incredible leap of faith. However, community outreach has not been a strong suit for us. We need to do listening sessions with communities. The big problem we will face next year is the bond. We need to look at the committees we have and what their role is. Director Bailey indicated that he will have a lot of questions going forward regarding the budget and the process. The board did not do well with KairosPDX this past year, and we didn't do well with Pioneer and ACCESS. He would like to see a database that is passed on to the next Board members which has links to each meeting topic. He was not fond of the information the Board receives in PowerPoints, and would rather like to see a report or "white paper" on topics.

Director Kohnstamm: the Board hasn't done any governance work in the past year, and we haven't discussed how the Board communicates with staff in bringing forward our individual community connections and historical knowledge. Board members could have eliminated some of the staff stumbles. The Board needs to formalize their strategic priorities and focus their work on them. The Board needs staff reports with the most salient information, not PowerPoints.

Director Brim-Edwards added that the community visioning process needs a reboot, and that the Board was looking for community ownership. The Board is the trustee for the vision.

Board Priorities

The Board was asked for a list of their top priorities for the 2018-2019 school year.

Director Kohnstamm: staff schools equitably, student achievement monitoring.

Director Bailey: bond oversight with communication strategy, CTE Plan, customer service, degree of collaboration with stakeholders.

Chair Moore: prepare the next bond package

Vice-Chair Esparza Brown: attendance boundaries, focus option programs, 21st century curriculum for all student groups, trying to engage all of our communities.

Director Brim-Edwards: develop a plan to oversee and evaluate the Superintendent and engage in goal setting, community vision for going forward, accountability and performance monitoring (HSA, Division 22), internal performance auditing function, assess implementation of middle schools, continued oversight of student safety [Whitehurst investigation], cultural responsiveness and educational equity, boundaries.

Chair Moore: visioning, building systems and structures, funding and resourcing, bond and levy. More cross governmental collaboration and coordination.

Director Anthony: improving results for ESL kids, state audit, contract negotiations, revisiting Kairos, CTE plan and programming plan for Benson, contract negotiations, levy campaign, legislative platform.

Director Rosen: bond, attendance boundaries, community engagement across all groups, accountability and performance monitoring (especially in monitoring student achievement), legislative strategy.

Dr. Vargas stated that a District the size of PPS could use a Government Relations department.

Top Priorities

The Board discussed the suggested priorities and came up with the below Top Four Priorities which could include all of the priorities mentioned.

1. Visioning, Strategic Plan Implementation, and Metrics/Measures of Success
2. Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes for all Students
3. Systems and Structures
4. Budget, Funding and Resources

At 12:15pm, the Board took a half hour lunch.

Establish Priority Goals for 2018-2019

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT), consisting of Superintendent Guerrero, Deputy Superintendent Curtis, Deputy Superintendent Hertz, and Chief of Staff Soden, shared their priority work with the Board: Vision, Strategic Plan, Resource Alignment, should not be thinking short-term in regards to funding, long term capital plan, bond campaign, actively engaged in legislative agenda, raising student outcomes, building organizational capacity, core curriculum, re-orient organization's culture, define core work, proactive in telling the story about PPS, central office needs to support the schools, and, quarterly planning retreats for the Board and leadership.

ELT recommended the following Working Agreements: assume good intentions, questions addressed to cabinet level staff and addressed to the person (all others cc'd), no surprises, email protocol, duty-free weekends for staff, and every Tuesday reserved for a Board Meeting or Work Session.. Director Brim-Edwards commented that the Board Chair does not need to be copied on everything, especially if they are just routine questions/emails.

ELT suggested that three Board members meet with the two Deputy Superintendents at least quarterly.

Chair Moore stated that in terms of staff reports to the Board, she did not want staff to write as advocates but as analysts. She wants to know the pros and cons of each topic presented to the Board. That was not what the Board was getting. The Board was receiving "this is what we should do" staff reports. Director Anthony concurred, adding that the Board is given "here is what you must do as a Board; there are no other options". Vice-Chair Esparza Brown stated that the Board needs to do their work based on data.

Discussion ensued around time limits on staff presentations, fewer PowerPoint presentations, and more detail in the written materials.

Chair Moore mentioned that a discussion as needed regarding the Committee structure. She recommends full Board Work Sessions on many of the agenda items, followed the next week by a regular Board Meeting. Director Brim-Edwards commented that Board members should rely on each other's expertise, so she was comfortable with the recommendations coming out of committees. Director Kohnstamm stated that one problem with having committees was that staff had to do a presentation twice. It was suggested that the Board try the approach as recommended by Chair Moore, with no standing committees, except for Charter Schools and legislative/policy.

The Board discussed public comment, but no conclusions were reached.

Visioning Process

Superintendent Guerrero provided a PowerPoint presentation titled *Defining our shared aspiration for the students of Portland Public Schools*, and stated that staff was working hard on a vision. He has an entirely new cabinet that has work to do in each of their departments.

Chair Moore stated that she would like clear direction, but she also wants people to understand what it is going to take.

Wrap-Up

Chair Moore suggested quarterly meetings similar to today's for a couple hours of work planning.

ADJOURN

Chair Moore adjourned the Retreat at 4:40pm.

Submitted by:

Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Clerk
PPS Board of Education