

**Portland Public School District 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon  
Board of Education's  
Finance, Audit and Operations Committee Meeting**

**August 9, 2017  
Informal Minutes**

The meeting of the Board's Finance, Audit and Operations Committee convened on the above date at 1:33pm at the call of Chair Rita Moore, in the Wy'east Conference Room at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon St., Portland, Oregon, 97227.

There were present:

Board Committee Members

Rita Moore, Chair  
Amy Kohnstamm  
Mike Rosen  
Paul Anthony

Staff

Yousef Awwad, Interim Superintendent  
Jerry Vincent, Chief Operating Officer  
Gitta Grether-Sweeney, Senior Director of Nutrition Services  
Whitney Ellersick, Assistant Director of Nutrition Services  
Ryan Vandehey, Public Records Officer  
Anna Richter Taylor, Interim Public Affairs Officer  
Harry Esteve, Strategic Communications Director  
Stephanie Harper, Senior Legal Counsel  
Courtney Westling, Government Relations Director

Public Comment

None

Public Records Process

Anna Richter Taylor, Interim Public Affairs Officer, asked the Board for guidance on how they would like to approach public records. Stephanie Harper, Senior Legal Counsel, provided an overview on exceptions to record requests: 1) the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and requires the consent of parents to release any student records; 2) the District does not have to provide a written record if nothing in writing exists; and, 3) there is protection for licensed personnel and their personnel file. Director Rosen stated that it was important to know all of the exceptions and it was also important that the Board have input to public record requests that are received by the District; the Board Chair should be responsible to communicate those requests to the Board. Ms. Richter Taylor commented that she would like an internal decision-making chart. Director Kohnstamm suggested that General Counsel include any public record requests in his monthly legal update. Director Kohnstamm added that the District's duty is to divulge information, but if legal counsel believes that there is an exception, they need to make that argument. Ms. Harper reported that the personnel record requests were the most challenging. Chair Moore stated that the District's default position should be disclosure unless an exception is clearly governed by state or federal statute. Ms. Richter Taylor commented that she would provide some examples of record requests, at a future FAO meeting, which will contain the pros and cons of releasing each request. Director Rosen indicated that he would like to see the examples before the District moves forward with default disclosure. Superintendent Awwad mentioned that the District would use the State Retention Schedule for printed records. Director Kohnstamm mentioned that she would like to see the fee information from other agencies because more clarity was needed. The Committee requested that staff return at a future meeting with more information on types of requests and to finalize the policy.

### **Community Eligibility Provisions**

Gitta Grether-Sweeney, Senior Director of Nutrition Services, provided a memo which contained the timeline for communicating with families at schools transitioning off of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Direct certification for CEP is provided by data retrieved throughout the entire year. Most data comes at the beginning of the year, but the District tries to match students throughout the year. Data is received from the Oregon Department of Education which receives the data from the Department of Human Services; the District was dependent upon them for that information. The CEP has only been in effect for four years. The District also receives additional data from each individual school and from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP, homeless, migrant and foster children are the total data group. Chair Moore suggested texting the notification of Free or Reduced Lunch to parents.

Chair Moore mentioned that she has heard that parents were reluctant to apply due to notifications to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and wanted it clarified that the data the District receives does not go to ICE. Ms. Grether-Sweeney responded that that was correct, and that the application states on it that it is confidential information. Ms. Grether-Sweeney stated that the District will be keeping free breakfast at the 12 schools that no longer qualify for CEP, and that the District provides every federal meal assistance program that is available to them. Chair Moore asked for an update on CEP in early October 2017.

### **Transportation Update**

Jerry Vincent, Chief Operating Officer, stated that the Transportation Department was working on its goals and objectives for the beginning of the school year, and that morale was building in the department. Mr. Vincent reported that TransPar (School Bus Consultants) was currently in Phase 2 of their work, after having first performed an assessment. The third phase will be a run-of-show. There are now six new phone lines for customer service, and we will be hiring for the Call Center. Mr. Vincent stated that he had met with the Union and the bus drivers will receive a \$1.58/hour raise. In addition, District bus drivers were happy with the changes that are planned, and recruiting for bus drivers is beginning to show good results. Mr. Vincent commented that the top department concerns were: projections; children boarding the right bus in the afternoons; radio communications; and tracking misplaced students. Work was currently being performed on an app which will allow parents to see where the bus is. Director Anthony asked if bus drivers were being given better maps for their routes. Mr. Vincent responded that new software will come online in October and that we will need to work with First Student drivers on sticking to the route that is given them. Chair Moore asked the proportion of District drivers vs. First Student drivers. Mr. Vincent responded that the District has 76 drivers and First Student provides 236 drivers. Chair Moore questioned if we had explored whether outsourcing makes sense. Superintendent Awwad responded that the District has not looked at whether outsourcing is the best way to go, but for the District to provide all the buses and drivers would be very expensive. Mr. Vincent added that First Student has a 4-year agreement with an option for a 5<sup>th</sup> year, but First Student has never met all the conditions of their contract. Director Rosen stated that if First Student could meet their contract obligations, things would work much better.

Director Anthony commented that an issue he hears in North/Northeast Portland is from the big elementary areas and the allegation that First Student allows their drivers to pick their own routes based on seniority. The problem we have is that the more senior drivers choose the better routes so that they don't have to deal with allegedly problematic children. Mr. Awwad responded that if that is in the union contract regarding seniority, then the District was stuck. Director Anthony stated that we need to change the driver perceptions about certain children. Mr. Vincent mentioned that he would work with the drivers; Rome wasn't built in a day, but we were getting there.

### **Committee Workplan**

Superintendent Awwad provided the following ideas for the next six months of the Committee Workplan: Transportation be brought back in November; Nutrition Services Update in October; budget discussion in September to include staffing, with updates in October and December. The goal this year is to adopt a budget in December. Superintendent Awwad suggested that the Committee hear the proposed complaint process in September, along with the public records process. Chair Moore mentioned the bond work sequencing for a September meeting and Superintendent Awwad stated it should be a committee topic every other month. Director Kohnstamm commented that revising the Ed Specs should be discussed in November, and Director Anthony stated that regular updates should be provided on maintenance and custodians in new buildings. Director Kohnstamm added that the Benson capacity and programs need to be revised and that perhaps that would occur in FAO or Teaching and Learning Committee. Chair Moore stated that she thought there would be a few topics that would overlap with another committee. Superintendent Awwad mentioned that two committees could meet together on a specific topic. Chair Moore thought a committee would need to consider the Middle School Implementation roll-out in September. Director Kohnstamm added that the following topics would also need to be addressed: athletic fees, programming at all high schools, and address fraud.

Chair Moore indicated that she would work with Superintendent Awwad on scheduling the topics mentioned. Chair Moore added that the plan was for the FAO Committee to meet twice a month the week before a regular Board meeting, and that Rosanne Powell, Board Office Manager, would be looking at whether FAO and the Teaching and Learning Committee could meet on Tuesdays.

Director Kohnstamm suggested that all committee work should be linked to the Board's priorities.

### **Next Steps**

Chair Moore indicated that the next FAO meeting was still to be determined and that there may or may not be another FAO meeting in August.

### **Adjourn**

Chair Moore adjourned the meeting at 3:37pm.

Submitted by:

---

Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Clerk  
PPS Board of Education