



ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1419 Northwest Valley View Drive
Roseburg, Oregon 97471

PUBLIC HEARING

November 5, 2014

6:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Rodney Cotton, Chair
Daniel Endicott
Joe Garcia
Charles Lee, Excused
Paul Meyer
Steve Patterson
Stacy Stiefel

Administration:

Dr. Larry C. Parsons, Superintendent
David Hanson, Assistant Superintendent/HR
Dawne Huckaby, Teaching & Learning Director
Cheryl Northam, Chief Operations Officer
Matthew Brausam, Student Services Director

TIME, PLACE: A public hearing to receive input regarding the Phoenix Charter School Renewal Request was held on November 5, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at Joseph Lane Middle School.

CALL TO ORDER: Board Chair Rodney Cotton brought the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Phoenix Charter School administrator Ron Breyne led the audience in the pledge to the flag.

ATTENDANCE: School Board members in attendance included Board Chair Rod Cotton, Daniel Endicott, Joseph Garcia, Charles Lee, Paul Meyer, Steve Patterson and Stacy Stiefel. Administration members included Superintendent Larry Parsons, David Hanson, Dawne Huckaby, Cheryl Northam and Matthew Brausam.

DISCUSSION: Superintendent Parsons announced that Phoenix School Executive Director Ron Breyne had prepared a power point presentation and would be addressing the audience first this evening.

Mr. Breyne shared the Phoenix School Mission:

“Students creating pathways to college and careers through high standards of academic achievement, career-technical education, and personal growth.”

Mr. Breyne noted that Phoenix students haven't changed much over the past few years, with slightly more females (51%) attending than males. Students range in age from 15-20 years with 72-78% of those coming from low-moderate income families. Additional demographic information included:

Students who qualify under IDEA:	23%
Formerly on IEP Programs:	14% +
Pregnant/Parenting:	8-16%
Ethnicity:	1.5-2% times that of county
Intact Households:	27%
Homeless:	12%
Juvenile Justice:	12%
AOD at entry:	41% (tested positive for drug use)
Proficient at Entry:	0%
On-time & On Track at Entry:	0%

Students attending Phoenix are from resident districts including Roseburg, South Umpqua, Winston-Dillard, Glide, Oakland, Riddle and Yoncalla.

School performance over the school years 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 was reviewed. A student graduation/retention rate of 94.5% in 2010 and 67% in 2014 including GED were reported. Ninety-six percent of students are referred by South Umpqua School District and 4% are self-referred. Phoenix was recognized as Oregon Charter School of the Year in 2010-11.

A Positive Youth Development Survey reflected the following findings:

- 80% of students are participating in more school activities
- 85% report improved decision making
- 75% state their grades improved
- 84% possess a more positive future orientation
- 77% are more likely to stand up for their beliefs
- 76% are more likely to take responsibility
- 79% believe they are making a difference

In 2011-12 the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation began requiring Highly Qualified (HQ) teachers, resulting in displacement of the existing Phoenix model in that students had to switch classrooms every period which was a change for them. The majority of Phoenix students need a self-contained model in order to learn to be a student, get along with others and become proficient at learning. Mr. Breyne further reflected that incoming student population of students 17-20 years old with little or no graduation credits earned make it very difficult to meet on time goals. Retention has also declined with 31% of students on track to graduate. Ron reported that two students have been expelled due to medical reasons and one due to the justice system.

Mr. Breyne stated that Phoenix is becoming a school of choice rather than a school of last resort. Currently, there are 21 ninth grade students, 42 tenth grade students, 52 eleventh grade students and 59 twelfth grade students enrolled. Approximately 1/3 of students are new to Phoenix. It was noted that no students are being referred from our district Alternative Education Program or counselors. Roseburg students are self referred. South Umpqua School District has referred 95% of Phoenix students, allowing the two schools to co-case manage those students. Students from that area are higher risk due to the longer travel distance to school.

Mr. Breyne shared that achievement of a high school diploma is no longer the “end point”. Phoenix has added a two credit requirement for Pathways (student transitions). In 2010 14% of students were on a college/career path, out of a goal of 100%. In 2014, 93% of students were on a college/career pathway. Students registering for college within one year of graduation were 9% in 2010 and 75% in 2014 with a school target of 85%.

Students attending Career/Technical Education readiness classes select from options that include:

- Natural Resource Management
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Culinary Arts Program
- Child Development
- Health Tech
- Computer Tech
- Leadership
- Business
- Women in Trades

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Audience members in attendance addressed the Board with the following comments:

Mandie Pritchard: This UCC staff member has worked in partnership with Phoenix for several years. She stated that Ron Breyne did a nice job highlighting the technical asset building done at Phoenix. She has observed the teachers address students on a first-name basis. When conducting orientation for students who will be attending UCC, she has the opportunity to meet Phoenix students and start building a partnership. Phoenix is providing students with a safe place to learn, thrive and grow.

Cody Manring: Cody shared that he is a senior student attending Phoenix and believes it is a great school and he would not wish to be anywhere else. His learning experiences have included student council, patrolling and monitoring student drug use both on and off campus, reporting back to administration. Cody plans to attend UCC with an objective of becoming a police officer.

Wendy Shryock: Wendy noted that she is the parent of 9th grade student who had difficulty finding her place at school due to nervousness and struggling with academic and emotional issues. Her child’s grades are coming up from failing, and the student is excited to go to school and happy to come back home. She noted that her child has become a completely different person. Wendy thanked the school and staff, adding that their support has been phenomenal. They know her daughter’s name and have been willing to step in and take care of her when she becomes anxious. She believes Phoenix is awesome and something this community needs. These kids need a place to learn to become productive members of society.

Devon Baer: Devon noted that he is a senior student at Phoenix and he promised his teachers that he wouldn't cause an issue tonight. He shared that when he was younger, he bought the black coat he was wearing, explaining that it's hard to be one of the people who are forgotten and put down when you couldn't keep up. Phoenix staff helped him and his fellow students to have faith. He was given help in math and staff members supported his goal of becoming a writer. Devon stated that any future he has he owes to them. He stated that students are given new hope when they attend Phoenix.

Philip Burdett: Philip noted that he is an alumnus of Phoenix. Philip reflected on having trouble in

public school and almost dropping out. A friend encouraged him to come to Phoenix in March 2009. He recalled being greeted by “Sam”, the office lady. At other schools the office staff never greeted students. Teachers allowed him to go at his own pace. His best friends are people he has met at phoenix. Teachers and staff made him feel welcome and that he could be himself. At times he couldn't complete assignments because of family issues and needed one-on-one help, which is what he received. He wasn't the only one who had problems, and emphasized that he does not think he would have graduated without Phoenix.

Shelby Neifert: Shelby announced that she has been employed with AmeriCorps and has lived in Douglas County for 20 years. She becomes anxious quickly and is very proud to be able to speak before the Board tonight. Shelby wanted to feel cultural acceptance as opposed to her experience at Fremont Middle School. At Phoenix she was allowed to work at her own pace, achieve required targets and meet expectations. She took on opportunities such as getting involved with organization that including the Oregon Youth Conservation Corp, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. She believes in supporting the natural ecosystem and was able to volunteer and do extra curriculum. Shelby enjoyed the outdoor education that was the source of her interest and success. The garden project is an example of what can be healthy and sustainable and what society needs nationally. Students were able to donate produce and do science projects outdoors. Culinary Arts Program students learned about hospitality and provided produce locally and sold it downtown. Shelby learned about community service and believes it makes life better. Shelby took college classes and completed a tour with AmeriCorps. She has been home for a year and applied at Goodwill. She attends UCC and is active in campus life. She thanked Phoenix for allowing her to make a difference in the community.

Ray Baumann: Ray shared that he began at Phoenix as a freshman and is now a sophomore. Attending Phoenix changed his life. He previously attended Douglas High School. Staff at the school helps him talk through his problems. He feels it would be terrible if that went away. Teachers there want to help kids. If the students went back to former schools they would be picked on again.

Not Identified: This student chose Phoenix for the one-on-one help provided. Teachers are welcoming and know your name. He wants to help others and would like to become a youth pastor. Experience at Phoenix has been wonderful and life changing. He is happier now at home and more willing to help out whereas he used to be frustrated and miserable. The younger students need this charter school to be renewed.

Kevin Hansberger: He dropped out of school his freshman year after receiving all failing grades. He suffered from depression following an accident early in his freshman year and considered himself a failure. Wanting to improve, he enrolled in Phoenix. He can't overstate his appreciation for the staff and has gotten back on track for graduation with perfect attendance and straight A's. His self esteem has increased considerably and he shared he doesn't know where he would be today without them. Kevin asked the board to vote in favor of renewing the charter.

Red Hair –(didn't identify herself): Last year attended RHS but had no friends and didn't get along with with teachers. At Phoenix the teachers are willing to help.

Mike Marsters: Graduated in 2008 and is here in support of Phoenix. When attending Douglas High he didn't care how he did. There are great staff at Phoenix. He has learned leadership skills. Mike was active in OYCC and now volunteers at the Family Development Center and has become a productive member of society. He joined the military and couldn't have done it without Phoenix due to his anxiety

and nervousness. He has gone back to Phoenix to visit and was welcomed. He feels that the staff wants to see you succeed in life and they help students to set and obtain goals. They are willing to help you, no matter how long you have been out.

Chelsea Ross (Math teacher at Phoenix): Chelsea read letters from two former students from out of state who aged out and couldn't graduate. The students shared that they learned to focus and everyone there helps each other. They live on their own and have jobs. During their time at Phoenix they gained perspective. "If I work hard enough I will eventually get where I need to be."

One of the students graduated at age 16 and attended Western Oregon College. The students are generally known for being the "bad" kids at school. She was a good kid all her life with a fairly clean record. Would not be where she is today without Phoenix. The student-teacher relationship is outstanding. Felt more at home there than when attending public school. Not judged. She was comfortable and got help when she needed it. She received help and support in achieving goals. Gained experience in the Child Care Program and is now pursuing that as a career. Phoenix became her second home. Spent hours volunteering on campus. Phoenix provided her with her first job as a member of the crew working in forestry. She had fun and received credit. They helped her to graduate early with a Biology major and minor in dance.

Kevin Wene: Kevin commented on Mr. Breyne's mentioning Phoenix being a first or last choice. He recalls fighting his mom tooth and nail not to enroll at Phoenix. Now he admits he was wrong on many levels. He was shy and anti-social and didn't speak to others. Now he is one of the most helpful students at Phoenix. With only 2.5 credits remaining, he is well on his way to graduate.

Ashley Speer: A senior at Phoenix and a teen parent. Her brother also attended and nearly graduated. He was unable to attend Douglas or RHS. She was able to take advantage of the free day care and was able to attend school and will graduate.

Roland Wong: With AmeriCorps Vista. Advocating the Natural Resources Management Program at Phoenix. Students learn hands-on skills. This is a nexus of partners bringing in organizations and agencies such as BLM, Umpqua Watersheds and UCC. They work to develop innovative programs for students and he feels it is a logical step to renew the Phoenix Charter.

Joe Spedman: Also with AmeriCorps Vista. Helping students become fish conservationists and foresters. Feels this is a crucial part of rebuilding Roseburg and Douglas County. Students need to learn practical skills alongside scientists and specialists. Youth Corp needs to continue.

Cindy Wilkerson (ADAPT Drug and Alcohol Counselor): Cindy is at Phoenix on a daily basis. They enjoy a great relationship with ADAPT. Each year more kids are involved and receiving services they wouldn't get at other schools. Success is increasing each year. The school climate and culture is nurtured and built. This helps students grow and have a sense of connectedness to the community. The students contribute more at school and the payoff is huge for our community. The connectedness is what makes Phoenix different. It is special and it would be a shame if the charter were not renewed.

Dave Forney (Teacher and Counselor at Phoenix): He is the point of contact with students and families interested in enrolling a student at Phoenix. Staff members get to know all the students. The advantage is that you get to resolution quicker. The sheer size of public schools results in counselors with overwhelming caseloads. There is good networking with ADAPT, Douglas Cares and Battered Persons

Advocacy. Students learn mediation skills to reduce conflict (neighbor to neighbor in transition classes). Students are taught basic skills. The rough population is embraced. All students have oddities but they grow faster with relationships.

Chris Livermore: A senior student at Phoenix, he is advocating in support of renewal. He wants to stay. He believes the only reason he's where he is with a job to support himself and his family and on track to receive a diploma while taking college courses, is the dedicated support of the staff. He has been provided with an opportunity to thrive and learn. He went to being a home school student taking only music to finishing eight credits in a year. He had outstanding progress from last year to this year. He was provided with the chance to prepare for a collegiate education and the district's support means the world to the students.

Sandy Webster: She worked as a child welfare worker for the state for 20 years. Her daughter teaches at Phoenix and her husband volunteers there and works with the students and teachers. Kids who were at risk achieved success when they couldn't at the other schools. It is wonderful to attend graduation and see the pride in their faces.

Patricia Erpelding: Her 17-year-old daughter has been attending Phoenix for four years and is on an IEP. The teachers have been incredible, helping her in a leadership activity for fundraising for a field trip.

Blond woman – not identified (Former Phoenix student): She stated that staff were good at finding options for everyone. Her previous school had given up on her. She didn't care for school and wanted to work in forestry. Phoenix staff helped her develop skills and receive education in Botany and Ecology. She was able to graduate on time and focus her energy. This summer she had the great opportunity to work as a firefighter. She now works at the Community Cancer Center.

Danielle Littlefield: Graduated in 2001 and was a young teen mom. She was able to finish her schooling. She had joined another teen mom there and they had planned to graduate together. Her friend died in a car accident and she was ready to quit school. The staff at Phoenix helped her to see her own potential. After graduation she earned her associate degree. She now has three small boys in public school. She encouraged the Board to let Phoenix remain an option for kids.

Gabrielle Webster (Teacher at Phoenix): Had previous experience as a counselor at Pitchford Boys Ranch. Has now been at Phoenix for 14 years. Believes there are excellent educational opportunities in Douglas County and they all have their pluses. She shared that Phoenix is right for a lot of students who didn't believe they could make it but they did. She is proud of the facility and students.

Thomas McGregor: Roseburg Schools has been a great partner in finding new ways to work with kids and the community. He would like Phoenix to remain a partner of Roseburg Schools.

Shyenne Rico: Spent three years at Phoenix before graduating. Attended RHS for a year and didn't like the size of the school. She didn't think the teachers knew she existed so she skipped class a lot and had only four credits in her freshman year. Phoenix helped her to get back on track to earn all credits a semester early. They paid the cost of a few classes at UCC. She was also able to job shadow a wildlife biologist. She ultimately graduated with 12 college credits. She felt supported and appreciated as a person and is in favor of charter renewal.

Diana Juarez: Also with AmeriCorps Vista. Is involved with creating the career education program at Phoenix. She studied to become an educator about half of her life, completing her student teaching at various schools. Phoenix is an example of what a school can mean to students, helping them to take pride and ownership. It was hard to express how exciting it is to see students put something on a plate (Culinary Program) and be proud of their work. That is what drew her to education, providing opportunities for others.

Justin Rush (English Teacher at RHS): His wife is Dean of Academic Support at Phoenix. Mr. Rush stated that he is proud of the people he works with and the work they do at Roseburg High School. The staff is as good as you can have. He attends events at Phoenix and understands the value it has. He reminded the Board that despite our best intentions and hard work, RHS is one model and it is good. But it doesn't work for every kid. If our goal is to serve all kids we need alternatives as RHS doesn't work for all kids. It speaks volumes that these students are up here and advocating that Phoenix is worth fighting for. If it is not renewed it would create a hole. Where would they go and what would their options be? Kids have innumerable challenges in their lives and Phoenix does an amazing job providing opportunities for kids, just the same as is done for kids at the other schools.

Tammy Bryant (A teacher in South Umpqua and spouse of a Phoenix teacher): Tammy shared that as a teacher at South Umpqua, she observes that kids go to Phoenix because they need a place – the traditional model does not work for them and Phoenix fills that hole. They have things that regular schools can't offer. They are innovative for kids and able to trigger their imagination. She expressed that she wishes it could happen at South Umpqua. She feels it would be a terrible shame for those things to disappear as options for students. She has worked as a first grade teacher and union president and has a first grade student now at Phoenix. The child was having a difficult time at school but is now thriving at Phoenix. The students are doing well there and need that place to be. She supports the charter.

Cody Manring (*addressing the Board for a second time*): Cody commented that without Phoenix he would be a drop out. He stated that kids who attend there are our future, and also the future of Oregon. Without “us”, we can't take care of “you”.

Chair Cotton thanked everyone in the audience for attending. He shared that last Wednesday our Board members spent a couple hours at Phoenix and taking a tour of the facility. There was a very good dinner provided by the kids, better than what you get at a Four Star restaurant. They were able to tour the Tech Room and see the 3-D printer, which was really impressive. Board members were pleased to be invited.

Mr. Cotton noted that this public hearing is only one part of the charter renewal process. The Board will be holding a Work Session on November 12th to review items specific to the contract. On December 10th, our Board will make a decision regarding the request for renewal. Chair Cotton thanked the audience again for making this a great meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

LP/jlk