



Board Highlights

An Open Letter from Board Member,
Becky Gooch

July 6, 2020

They say that “time flies when you are having fun” and I can attest to the fact that the last twelve years have been fun, and sometimes frustrating, and sometimes infuriating - but more often they have been exciting, fulfilling, engaging and life changing. They also say “all good things must come to an end” - not sure who “they” are but I know that “they” were right. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3, the writer laments on the fact that for every activity under the sun, there is a season. Tonight I announce that my season as an incredibly proud member of the Putnam City School Board is ending. But of course, I don’t go quietly, no not me. I have things to talk about if you will indulge me.

First and foremost, thank you. Thank you for letting me walk alongside you for the last 12 years. Thank you for your kind words, your encouragement, your patience and for teaching me the ever-changing business of public education. I love Putnam City Schools. As many of you know, I was a Rollingwood Rocket for 3 years before we moved to Texas. Tracey went to Lake Park, Western Oaks and graduated from PCW in 1983. Kendall and Maggie graduated from PC North in 2013 and 2014. Tanner, Trey and Tate graduated from PC West in 2015, 2017, and 2018. We are truly a Putnam City family and that will never change.

I am so proud to be associated with our district. I love how committed we are to the arts in our district, athletics and academics - and did I mention how much I love our GOLD BALLS?! I have loved test monitoring, subbing, PTA / PTO meetings, selling popcorn and popsicles, booster meetings, chaperoning and decorating for dances - the list could go on and on. Friday nights will also be high school football nights for the Gooches - so just save us a seat in the press box! In the last few years at work, I have loved seeing our kiddos come to the Capitol - Silver Strings, Christmas tree decorating and teachers, parents and students interacting with our elected officials advocating for our schools. We have so many amazing things to be proud of in our district.

Five years ago this October, our world collapsed one early Monday morning. The outpouring of love and support from our Putnam City family was unlike anything I have ever witnessed. People just showed up and helped carry the girls and I through those first days, those first weeks and really through that first year. Thank you seems so inadequate but truly thank you for loving us so well and for stories, support and for remembering our Tracey. And then, more love when we added these precious Gooch men to our family. You have embraced Ron and instantly made him feel welcome and you have supported our new family with your love, encouragement and friendship. Again, thank you!
(Continued on Page 2)

Meeting Date: Monday, July 6, 2020, 5 p.m.
Location: Administration Building

Next Meeting: Monday, July 20 2020 5 p.m.
Putnam City Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, or disability.

Present: Jay Sherrill, Charity Avery, Becky Gooch, Cindy Gibbs, Gail LoPresto, Dr. Fred Rhodes, Tina Losawyer

Board Highlights Page 2

July 6, 2020

(Continued from Page 1)

It's time to step down and let someone else in my area serve the district. I know and respect the amazing people in my board area and I know there will be wonderfully talented and committed people who will want to serve and for that, I am appreciative and it makes this transition just a little bit easier. I feel that I should be blunt here - considering the timing of this decision. This has nothing to do with the spilt vote last meeting on the contract. A good board should disagree sometimes and believe me, we have disagreed before and we have always committed to voting how we feel and then moving on in a cohesive manner to do the good work of the district. I truly serve with the most selfless of individuals and I am proud to call each one a friend. This last meeting was no exception - there is work to be done and believe me, I know these servants will do the work to address each and every concern and issue and I have faith in this tremendous team of educators that serve our district. Dr. Rhodes and his team are the right people to continue to move this district ahead. Education is always the answer to the ills of society - we must continue to have the hard conversations, acknowledge the issues and make the changes to move ahead and I know that this Board and this administrative team are committed to doing just that because our students deserve this level of dedication. Our students are counting on us to do it right!

Simply put, I ran for the school board because of our girls and now I step off for the same reason. As most of you know, there is this pesky little state statute that will not allow family members of a School Board to be employed by the district. I am stepping down because our youngest daughter has been offered a wonderful position in our district and we, as a family, know that she will be a tremendous influence on her students and peers. The impact that a teacher can have on a child is life changing and I know that in my heart this is the right decision. Having both of our daughters teaching is extremely gratifying to this momma bear who knows and appreciates the importance of public education. This has been such an emotional decision but it's right and it's time. My resignation will be effective tomorrow so this will be my last board meeting as an official Board member. But, don't you worry - I know how to show up and ask to do public participation! I am not gone - I'm sure that I will be volunteering again very soon. I just want each of you to know what an honor it has been to serve our district. It has been one of my greatest joys and I will be forever grateful for this opportunity.

Becky Gooch, Board Member

Board Highlights is not a comprehensive review of every item that takes place at board of education meetings. Its purpose is merely to provide information about items that seem of most interest to district employees and patrons. Complete board meeting minutes may be found at <https://www.putnamcityschools.org/about-us/board-of-education/board-meeting-minutes>

Comments by Board Members and Public

Two 2020 Putnam City graduates, Paige Bush and Madison Lonteen spoke about graduation ceremony ideas for their class.

All board members expressed feelings of happiness to see everyone at the first in-person meeting since quarantine.

Charity Avery thanked students for coming to the meeting to speak about graduation. She also said it's great to be there in person.

Becky Gooch read a letter that is published on pages 1 and 2 of this publication.

Gail LoPresto praised Becky for all of her work and thanked her. She encouraged serious candidates to run for election of her seat.

Cindy Gibbs thanked Gail for 23 years and congratulated her for her election. She also thanked the Administration TEAM for their hard work on returning to school. She thanked Becky for her passion while serving on the Board.

Jay Sherrill said Becky is passionate about every single child in this district. He said she always, texts back and picks up the phone. He said he is blessed to be on the Board with her.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

BY DR. FRED RHODES

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Congratulations to Gail LoPresto on being re-elected to the PC School Board!

Return to Learn:

Thank you to parents and teachers who completed the recent Return to Learn survey. We are in the process of compiling the results. The parent survey showed that almost 70% of parents intend for their children to return to traditional on-site school this fall. The results show that exposure to COVID-19 is the top concern of parents followed by mental health of students. The District is working on a plan that is best for students and staff. An announcement regarding the Return to Learn plan will be made on July 14th. Online enrollment will also be announced on July 14th. There will be more details to come.

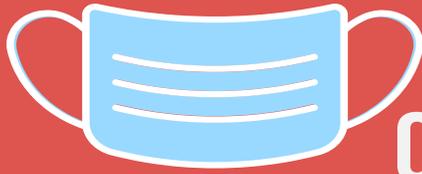
Congratulations:

Congratulations to District Athletic Director, Dr. Dick Balenseifen, on being awarded the State Award of Merit by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators! Dr. Balenseifen has served as District Athletic Director for nine years at Putnam City. We appreciate his leadership which has advanced the District to the next level in all the athletic programs offered to students.

There is more good news to share from PC Athletics! Congratulations to PC High senior, Bobby Wood for being named the Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Wood is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from PC High School. The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Wood as Oklahoma's best high school boys track & field athlete. He is now a finalist for the national award. Wood will be attending Stanford in the fall.

Facilities Management:

And finally, I wanted to report that we are working on a plan to improve the management of District facilities. Following the last school board meeting, I immediately formed a task force to start looking at resolutions. The task force met on Wednesday. On Thursday, I met with the first of many focus groups comprised of employees in these departments, to hear their ideas about how we can improve. This process will take time, but it is an important part of the process in sound decision making. My goal is to continue meeting with focus groups until I have had an opportunity to meet with all employees. Ideas presented during focus group meetings will be shared with the task force. And once the task force has resolutions, we will be making recommendations to the Board.



COVID COMMUNICATION



Putnam City Schools is compiling feedback from staff and parents. The PC Return to Learn plan is being created with this input and will be released **July 14th**. A new service of online enrollment will also be offered on July 14th.

Other items passed at tonight's meeting:

- Mutual Cooperation with Oklahoma County
 - Cindy Gibbs elected President
 - Jay Sherrill elected Vice President
 - Sandy Lemaster elected Board Clerk
 - Tina Losawyer elected Deputy Board Clerk
 - Fonda Watkins elected Encumbrance Clerk
 - Federal claims approved signatures and emergency federal claims signatures
- **More details about this and the full agenda can be found at ww.putnamcityschools.org