

ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Meeting and Board Work Session

Via Zoom

1419 NW Valley View Drive
Roseburg, Oregon

Vol 3 No. 3

August 25, 2021

Board Members:

Dr. Brandon Bishop
Rodney Cotton
Rev. Howard Johnson, Vice Chair
Ann Krimetz
Rebecca Larson, Chair
Charles F. Lee
Andrew Shirtcliff



Administration:

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent
Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources
Michelle Knee, Assistant Superintendent
Cheryl Northam, Chief Operations Officer
Melissa Roberts, Director of Student Services



REGULAR SESSION - SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

TIME/PLACE: A regular meeting of the Douglas County School District No. 4 Board of Directors was convened at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 25, 2021, in the Administrative Office Board Room located at 1419 NW Valley View Drive in Roseburg, Oregon, electronically via Zoom link.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board Chair Rebecca Larson called the meeting to order promptly at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees and asked Director Brandon Bishop to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE: Board members were in attendance via Zoom. Superintendent Cordon, Assistant Superintendent, Michelle Knee and Chief Operations Officer, Cheryl Northam were on site. Reporter Madison Tremmel and Roseburg High School Leadership student, Marin Gray, joined the meeting via Zoom.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD / REVIEW OF AGENDA

Board Chair Rebecca Larson and Superintendent Cordon reminded everyone of the Board's intention to conduct one business meeting each month, as well as a work session to allow the Board opportunities to learn and have time to wrestle with issues and consider best practices as local school districts continue navigating the challenges put before them. While this looks a bit different, it will be the format used going forward.

Superintendent Cordon announced that two additional recommendations for licensed hires has been added to the Consent Agenda for consideration. The Consent Agenda was included this evening to allow our Human Resources staff to obtain approval for new hires prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Consent Agenda was presented, including approval of the Consent Agenda, Minutes from the August 11 School Board Meeting; updated recommendations for employment and notices of resignation, surplus items

listing and Gifts to the District. Personnel actions included:

Hiring Recommendations:

Licensed Staff:

- Eastwood Elementary
 - Will Irwin, Child Development Specialist
- Fremont Middle School
 - Ella Taggart, Language Arts Teacher (a temporary position for the 2021-22 school year); and
 - Gary “Andy” Wyatt, Math Teacher (also a temporary position for the 2021-22 school year)
- Joseph Lane Middle School
 - Jane Edwards, Sixth Grade Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher
- Winchester Elementary
 - Jeffrey Hall, Kindergarten Teacher; and
 - Yuka Matsuzoe, First Grade Teacher

Resignations

Licensed Resignations:

- Johanna Bean, hired for Third Grade at Hucrest Elementary School and approved by the Board at the August 11, 2021 Board Meeting, will not be accepting the position;
- Anna Kaas, hired for Third Grade at Eastwood Elementary School and approved by the Board at the August 11, 2021 Board Meeting, will not be accepting the position and instead remain in Wisconsin; and
- Christina Moroney, Drama Teacher at Roseburg High School, has resigned to take a position in another district, effective October 15, 2021.

Director Brandon Bishop moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Director Howard Johnson seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

M3-12 Approved the Consent Agenda

With the Consent Agenda approved, Board Chair Rebecca Larson recessed that portion of the meeting and moved directly into a Board Work Session at 6:02 p.m.

BOARD WORK SESSION

Superintendent Cordon introduced Dr. Jill Weber, Principal of RHS, Ben Bentea, Principal of Fremont Middle School, and Nicki Opp, Principal of Jo Lane Middle School, explaining that they would be sharing information highlighting the many strategies and opportunities provided to our secondary students to help them thrive as they journey toward graduation and beyond. Jared also announced that Principal Weber has successfully completed her doctorate studies.

Upon arriving at the District in 2019, Jared and the administrative team spent considerable time examining the areas where we were doing well, as well as those areas needing improvement. A three-year strategic plan was developed. Children are at the center of the plan, and we are challenged to design systems that can keep up with how smart our kids are to accommodate their needs. Our strategies for helping our kids be successful are driven by equitable student experiences as defined by the key priorities within that Strategic Plan:

- ✓ Appropriate and timely instruction
 - Teachers have resources to meet the needs of our kids
 - All staff have skills to meet kids’ needs
 - Design system to meet the needs of each child

- ✓ Safe and inclusive environment
 - Make sure kids are seen, heard and respected
- ✓ Effective Operations
 - High quality operational strategies and systems
 - Operating budget of approximately \$131 million
- ✓ Leadership Development
 - Our challenge – how to get from good to great?
- ✓ Systems Development
 - Be data informed
 - How do we know things are working?
 - Evidence of effectiveness

Spark and Passion

Principals Weber, Opp and Bentea acknowledged the correlation between highly engaged students and high graduation rates, noting that keeping students engaged is most effective when they are encouraged to find their personal passion, their “spark”.

We encourage students in that journey by providing activities at the middle school level including Fine Arts, Performing & Musical Arts; Woodshop; Electives such as creative writing, modern issues and natural resources; after-school clubs; athletic programs; technology, video production, yearbook and graphics design. Principal Bentea is proud that our 6A district provides similar opportunities for kids as the metro schools. We have increased options in fine arts, graphic arts and woodshop to engage students at earlier ages. Principal Opp related that there are many after school clubs such as robotics, FBLA, spirit club to allow non-athlete students to support athletic activities, expanded league sports to grow skills, walking groups, anime, skateboarding, etc. Over the past three years, there has been a focused, intentional effort to connect middle school offerings to the high school to support the programs and enhance the grade 6-12 experience. CTE helps the graduation rate by building connections, and this is probably true in music, band, choir, drama, etc. These connections allow our students to develop and follow their passions and spark as it prepares them for the activities at the high school.

At the high school, offerings include 9 CTE (Voc-Ed) programs; Fine, Performing & Musical Arts; Extensive other electives such as Journalism, advanced math and science, psychology and three world languages. Over 50 individual clubs, Career & Technical Student Organizations (CTSO); 19 different athletic programs and 40 individual teams; and innovative technology that includes Z-Space, 3D printers, plasma cutters and industry standard auto. At RHS, CTE students have nearly a 95% graduation rate. Principal Weber agreed with the middle school leaders that RHS is the perfect size, containing enough teachers, staff and students to provide a wealth of opportunities within small learning environments. Industry professionals work with the high school to advise staff in instructing to industry standard, allowing students to move right into the work world. Some college students report back to us that they actually moved backward at college as they were at a higher level at RHS. The Orange R receives awards every year, and 150 students participate in the award-winning marching band.

Principal Weber encouraged Board members to visit RHS and personally observe what we offer students. Jill tries to visit each club the students have created, including Hot Wheels, Chess, Skeet Shooting, Skills USA, FBLA (whose members compete at a national level), Leadership, equestrian, bowling, virtual augmented reality, Z-space, 3D, etc. She expressed pride in what this district has been able to provide for RHS students.

Promoting Rigor & Achievement

The District strives to meet students where they are academically by ensuring a year’s worth of progress for a year’s worth of education. Rigor and achievement are evidenced by the RHS graduation rate increasing by 10 percentage points in 2020, reaching 86 percent. Supports at the middle school level include TOSAs and

instructional coaches; Grade level houses; Assessment teams; GriP teams; accelerated courses and TAG clustering. At RHS, 24 credits are required to graduate. Dual credit and AP course options are available, along with 250+ college credits; Seal of Bi-Literacy and focus on academic rigor and instruction.

Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) focus on instruction, coaching first and second year teachers and assisting department leaders with Wednesday afternoon professional development plans by identifying attainable goals. They can attend and help facilitate team meetings and observe classroom activities to help identify what strategies work and those that aren't successful. Instructional coaches support specific areas with teachers observing each other's teaching to gain understanding of what the next instructional moves should be, essentially meeting kids where they are.

Grade level houses at the middle schools includes groups of four teachers delivering core instruction and providing support over all content areas. The teams identify students who are struggling in order to provide strategies to support each child. That focus includes a student's attendance and how they are getting along emotionally and socially.

Principal Bentea added to Principal Opp's comments, explaining that we grow teachers professionally to impact student learning, using both district and state assessments to make informed instructional decisions. The teams utilize a three-prong process: for students who are excelling, we find a way to engage them; TAG students have access to inclusion classes to better support them; and GriP meetings for students needing interventions. Every six weeks, the teams use progress monitoring data to assess if interventions are changing the learning trajectory. They can then make decisions based on that information to support the student as they move through the system. Teachers think of ways to provide enrichment opportunities within the core for advanced students. The TAG Coordinator will oversee TAG clustering to provide those opportunities for accelerated learning.

Director Krimetz inquired if the grade level houses are determined through assessment, and Principal Opp responded that it is more random using the schedule builder in the Synergy program. Eight teachers from a grade level share the same group of students who often see each other in classes, making connections and friendships, thereby making the school experience feel a bit smaller.

[Supporting the Whole Child](#)

Roseburg Public Schools employs a variety of support staff and specialists who focus on students' mental health, social-emotional learning and academic guidance. The new Social-Emotional Learning Coordinator, Mendy Endicott, will help create a culture of safety and respect for all students and adults. This is intended to support the social, emotional and physical well-being of students and is critical to academic success.

Whole Child middle school supports include two academic counselors, a school psychologist, mental health therapists, a skills trainer, TOSA, smaller learning communities in each grade, school-wide behavior lessons and a PBIS incentive system.

At RHS, supports include 9th and 10th grade SLC's, Advisory by grade, 5 academic counselors, a college and career center, graduation coach; web of support (9ST, SSST, Att.); school psychologists, mental health therapists, a Teen Health Center, Upward Bound, ETS and School to Work programs. Future efforts will continue in the areas of GED, UCC connections, STEAM teachers, our nursing program and expansion of auto diesel.

On the Horizon

- With Rose students moving to RHS, this will bring our GED program to RHS, providing those students with more elective opportunities.
- The superintendent has already met with the new President of UCC, Dr. Rachel Pokrandt, and is confident that forging strong connections will make our organizations better.
- Five of our nursing program students graduated and went directly into the work force for CNA.
- Our expanded auto program will include diesel as more mechanics are needed in the work force.
- This year the elementary schools will have four STEAM teachers funded through the SIA. They will be on a two-week schedule visiting those elementary schools providing STEAM lessons and hands-on instruction in areas such as robotics.

Understanding State Mandates

Jared summarized the recent mandates regarding masks and vaccines announced by the state last week. He provided assurance that our schools are prepared to assist our student families as we adhere to the legal requirements that allow us to provide the in-person instruction that is vital to the success of our students.

Superintendent Cordon shared that of the 122 state requirements and mandates put in place during the 2020-21 school year, only five exist for the new school year, including:

- Locally published and submitted plan for operations
- Recovery services process
- Quarantine/isolation protocols
- Indoor face coverings
- Vaccination requirements for all K-12 staff

Prior to the pandemic, these protocols/procedures were required and remain required:

- ✓ Communicable disease plan
- ✓ Isolation space
- ✓ Exclusion for exposed individuals
- ✓ Division 22

Decisions on additional layered mitigation protocols are local. The District utilizes its Operations Team to navigate the mandates.

Face Covering Mandate:

Face coverings are now required indoors for all private and public schools. The Governor's most recent announcement regarding face masks outdoors does not apply to K-12 students or staff during school hours.

- The proper use of face coverings will ensure fewer students will need to quarantine in the event of a positive case at school. This helps to ensure continuity of in-person learning.
- At this time, students will not be required to wear face coverings while participating in competitive athletics. When not actively competing or practicing, student-athletes will be required to don face coverings.
- The district will center grace and patience and reteach the expectation if students struggle with mask rules. Students who will not wear a mask and do not fall under exemption categories will be directed to our online programs.

Vaccine Mandate for K-12 staff:

The Oregon Health Authority will issue a rule requiring all public and private school teachers, educators, support

staff, and volunteers in K-12 schools to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 18, or six weeks from FDA approval, whichever is later.

- The district is awaiting clarification on the mandate from ODE.
- We are in discussions with Douglas ESD to help manage exemptions.
- Human Resources Dept. will be examining the order and how it relates to district policy.

The strategies we used last year will help to keep kids in person. We intend to focus on reteaching expectations. We are still awaiting specifics on how the rules will be written, and ODE will be sharing more specifics tomorrow afternoon. Staff members are asking great questions and we are asking questions of the Oregon Health Authority as well as ODE.

Director Andrew Shirtcliff questioned the possibility of not enforcing the mask mandate since the sheriff has stated he does not intend to enforce it. Director Charles Lee responded that we should not encourage people to not follow the law. We don't know what the rules will be, so this is premature. Director Shirtcliff also inquired if we would dismiss a child, and Jared reminded him that we spent last year in this world. There were really no issues last week during registration. We are helping parents understand the "why", that this is a state mandate. As an organization, we have to balance the potential of fines, liability, licensure, etc. This is not something that needs to impede the process of getting kids back to school next week.

Jared added that in addition to the initial 300 emails he received, there have been more than 1,000 emails from parents on both sides of the mask mandate. This has been diminishing, possibly due to the exploding COVID rates. Douglas County is leading the west coast right now. Director Krmetz confirmed that she is hearing from the community that they want kids in school, and she appreciated tonight's conversation about the Whole Child. She is concerned about kids wearing a mask for hours at school and how that is affecting them.

Chair Larson shared that when individuals express frustration, she reminds them where we were last year. Even with the masks, this is so much better than sitting in front of a computer all day, and we should count our blessings. Her kids are so excited to be back at school and in person.

Director and physician Brandon Bishop stated that it's a terrible message to fight a mask mandate when our community is struggling to staff the hospital to fight an infection that is going crazy. Everything is not fine, and this is not the right moment to be fighting this when we need to rally as a community. On a personal level, he encouraged people to make the right decision and get the vaccine, social distance and wear a mask.

In response to questions from Director Shirtcliff, the superintendent responded that we intend to help families who still don't feel comfortable attending in person by having the option of the virtual school. We have likely over-planned for the start of school with a soft start on Monday, elementary on Tuesday and Wednesday all students return. If a family chooses to switch back to in-person instruction during the year, they will be encouraged to wait until the semester break. We are hoping that the case rates sharply decrease, but we can't predict the year. Kids moving back and forth is not good for kids, and the grades 6-12 options through Apex are a bit harder to start and stop. We will try to provide flexibility for parents.

Jared acknowledged our Board's and community's frustrations with regard to the state mandates and noted that our focus has been and will continue to be getting kids back to school.

Director Rod Cotton speculated that the state may revisit the numbers later this fall and maybe the masks will go away. In the meantime, cases numbers are terrible and he suggested perhaps inviting Dr. Dannenhoffer to a board meeting to provide insight. While we may not always agree, Dr. Dannenhoffer is intelligent and has given so much to this community and he continues to try and keep us all safe. Director Cotton added that both he and Director Lee served on this Board with Ann Dannenhoffer for a few years, and they are a great family.

Director Ann Krimetz added that she would like Dr. Dannenhoffer to share data regarding children who are affected by the variant, noting that they are the ones mandated to mask while we are at home and not required to wear them.

Chair Larson responded that her husband, a physician, wears a mask all day long, every day, as do many others. While wearing a mask is not a child's favorite thing, we need to encourage kids to mask up. She further encouraged adults to be positive and grateful for the good things happening. She feels heartened by the teaching staff and administrators for their passion in making school happen and engaging with kids.

Director Krimetz expressed that she also sees the concern parents have for kids, and as representatives of the community, we have to represent them as well.

Chair Larson responded that while she absolutely respects that, her family has lived all over the country, including Oregon, and Roseburg has options in place. We have set up the Roseburg Virtual School and homeschoolers participate in extra-curricular activities. We respect what parents want to do.

Reflections

Director Howard Johnson expressed concern with his perception of gang presence in our area. He noted that indications in the color of clothing, behaviors, etc., and encouraged the community to take it seriously. Principal Weber pointed out that we have board policy and connections with the police force. The officers keep us current on what to look for. RHS works hard investigating vaping, etc., utilizing our SROs and police force/security on campus. Superintendent Cordon shared that our county has an epidemic with drug use, and children are not immune to that. District Safety Coordinator, Ed Villarreal, coordinates with our local law enforcement, and student surveys indicate that for the most part, our students feel safe at school. Students are taught the importance of staying in school and away from drugs. Director Johnson invited Mr. Villarreal on a tour of Roseburg to point out his areas of concern.

Director Johnson also inquired about the demographics of TAG students, and if those numbers included any students of color. Assistant Superintendent Michelle Knee promised to get those numbers to the Board tomorrow. Chair Larson added that a few years ago the District lacked a TAG Coordinator. Now all second-grade students are included in screening for TAG eligibility during the month of October using a nationally standardized test that is screened for bias.

Director Charles Lee commented that he enjoyed the discussion around "spark and passion" and the marvelous presentation about available outreach services. Teachers and staff are trying to identify kids who are not engaged. With all of his questions answered, Director Lee looks forward to seeing any impact on the kids he deals with in criminal circumstances or divorce to observe if there is evidence of spark and passion.

ADJOURNMENT: With all business concluded, Chair Rebecca Larson adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent
JPC/jlk

Next Meeting: September 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Administrative Office Board Room via Zoom