

**ORANGE SOUTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT (Unified)  
BOARD MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023 @ 6 P.M.  
BROOKFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**To be approved at the August 9, 2023 board meeting**

**MINUTES**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Anne Kaplan, Katja Evans, Rachel Gaidys, Hannah Arias, Megan Sault, Chelsea Sprague, Sarah Haupt & Sam Hooper  
ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Layne Millington & Heather Lawler  
GUESTS: Sue Smith & ORCA Media Video Taping

- I. Opening  
The meeting was called to order by Chair, Hannah Arias, at 6:01 p.m.  
Board Attendance: Ensuring a Quorum  
Meeting Purpose: Ends Report, Review of Ends
- II. Board Education and Ownership Linkage
  - a. Public comment (4.2.1) (Recognize e-communications to the Board)  
Hannah Arias read a statement regarding public comments at board meetings and then opened the meeting for public comments. There were no public comments.
  - b. Written Communication to the Public  
Chelsea Sprague & Hannah Arias met with Ben Merrill to prepare a draft letter from the board to be sent out to the community. Chelsea sent a copy of the letter to the board members prior to the meeting. The board discussed when and how to get it out to the community. Maybe on front porch forum with a link. Some of the board felt it was too long & wordy and that we should be looking forward and not on back issues. The board is to send edits of the letter to Chelsea by noon on Monday and she'll get back to Ben with the revisions.
- III. Monitoring: Organization
  - a. Superintendent's Evaluation Process  
Chelsea contacted the VSBA about the superintendent's evaluation process and sent the information out to the board. OSSD can hire the VSBA for the evaluation process with a committee of our board members to oversee the process. The evaluation process would have 3 to 5 annual goals. The board discussed if it would be a good place to start to have the VSBA lead the board or if the board would want to design something themselves. The VSBA cost is \$1,500. A lot of discussion including: The VSBA would be current with the rubrics. Layne explained to the board the usual process which is to tell the person being evaluated upfront what the board is looking for. His current contract is written for Policy Governance and states his evaluation is based on EL & Ends reports. Usually the process would be to develop the goals collaboratively for next year with the evaluation at the end of next year. It is appropriate to give time and he would be happy to have his contract changed if necessary. Anne Kaplan felt a lot of the VSBA process would connect with the policies we already have. Hannah felt that what we have now is too restrictive, not successful & not working and would like to reevaluate as a group. Layne suggested a feedback protocol and presented sample questions on a PowerPoint. Layne feels feedback is necessary and he has never had this. He is open to the evaluation process. The board

discussed when the VSBA contract would start and noted it will take extra meetings and time for a committee to work on. The first step would be to vote to see if the board wants to engage in a contract with the VSBA. Last time this was sprung on Layne at the end of the year. The survey was sent out to his direct reports such as the principals, etc. More discussion regarding once goals are set, how they will be measured. Hannah will connect with Pietro regarding language changes.

A motion was made to have Chelsea Sprague contact the VSBA on behalf of the school board to start the superintendent's evaluation process at a cost of \$1,500.

By: Sam Hooper  
Seconded by: Sarah Haupt  
Motion passed: Yes, unanimous

An evaluation committee will be formed at the July special meeting to work with the VSBA.

b. Approve Ends Report (enclosed)

Layne is requesting direct discussion/feedback on the Ends report which the board has had for 3 months. What are the implications? The board expressed concern about the 7<sup>th</sup> grade data and there was discussion about why. Layne explained that there was a plan in place prior to COVID to think about moving the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the high school which also gives room for the pre-schools. What happened when discussion was starting about what this would look like is that a bunch of staff got on-line and worked everyone into a tizzy. This created an echo chamber and had to refocus to calm everyone down. Layne had showed the data regarding positive aspects of this move, but the damage was done. Then the focus was to get scores up at the middle school first. There has been tremendous work at the elementary level to get high school and tech center where they should be. There are certain things all schools do, but some folks don't want to change. We have a mission to do. Hear push back in negatives. RTCC & RUHS need critical work done. Hannah remembers the conversation about the 6<sup>th</sup> grade moving to middle school which was in the middle of the school year and it was hard to think about a change for the following year. When things calmed down, it killed something that could have been beautiful. Layne requested that when the board hears things on the street, call him or the board chair. If folks are just hearing things and not asking for clarification, please tell folks to contact Layne. Layne asked that the board works together with him as a team and they correct folks if hearing rumors on the street. Necessary to hear both sides before you make a judgement. Layne needs backing and trust. Make sure to do our homework so have answers and be trained to go to the source.

Layne showed the number of teachers leaving which is a 7.4% turnover rate. The average rate prior to COVID was 16%. There has been a rumor about cutting support staff. In 2017-2018 there were 50 support staff and presently there are 82. Teachers in 2017-2018 were 130 and now 147. The OSSD staff was at 217 then and now at 262. The budget increased by 41% to support staff to do the work that needs to be done. We need to change some structures. Heather brought in 1.4 million in grant funding.

Anne is wondering about expanding the Ends as would like some benchmarks beyond 9<sup>th</sup> grade and testing data ends early. Layne told the board that every department worked on the Ends this year with evidence style essay questions. Next year, based on data will

identify which ones are under performing and how to address with a follow up form of assessment. Suggested these teachers should come in to present their work. Discussed elementary benchmarks through tests and would like to look at other benchmarks for assessment, possibly on-line tools. Layne has tried to connect through Open Forums and Listening Sessions. At a point of changing some structures that need to be changed. We have obligations to staff via contract and they have obligations to us too. It is our call on master schedules and homework policy which we will talk about mandating in executive session.

Anne met with Layne on the Ends and felt it is a work in progress and a meaty document. Discussed that different classes have different strengths and is aware that the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades are typically difficult. Would like to see other data points in addition to testing. The board needs to be clear about what they want from Layne. The board has work to do to give Layne goals and talk about what is important and the best way to proceed.

A motion was made to accept the Ends Report  
By: Chelsea Sprague  
Seconded by: Sam Hooper  
Motion passed: Yes, unanimous

c. VSBA Ends Discussion

Regarding training to update the Ends, the VSBA says we are skipping a step. We need info from the community on what they want. Discussed how to get the community input. Possibly set up a table with a couple of questions on cards may be at a school event which would become part of the Ends focus. The Portrait of a Graduate would align with the Ends. Maybe do another data dive to include stakeholders not involved in the school community. Suggestion of bringing the POG draft out to the community. Maybe email it to the community as a survey vote. Felt more likely to vote if have something in front of them. Suggestion of doing this at Back to School night, at town offices, the library, etc.

The board then discussed what to use the July meeting time for. The board needs real time to do board work. The board decided to have a special meeting on Wednesday, July 5 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. for a discussion & work on the Ends. The regular meeting on July 12 will be canceled.

d. Quarterly Facilities Report (enclosed)

Layne reviewed the report and noted that the major items are highlighted. He reviewed the Facility Reserve requests that are in the Consent Agenda which are the generator at Randolph Elementary, paving the Brookfield parking lot, and repair of the easement near RTCC which will be discussed more in executive session. This is the primary exit for RTCC. With the generator installed, each school will be an emergency site for our community.

IV. Policy Decisions: District Governance

a. Second Review/Approval of EL 2.7 - Compensation and Benefits

Motion to approve EL 2.7 - Compensation and Benefits report

By: Megan Sault  
Seconded by: Sarah Haupt  
Motion passed: Yes, unanimous

- b. First Review of Required Policy - F3 Fire & Emergency Preparedness Drills (enclosed)  
Layne explained that due to the swatting incidents this year, the legislation requires the following two policies be in place by August 1<sup>st</sup>. They also require an all hazard emergency plan be in place.
- c. First Review of Required Policy - F4 Access Control & Visitor Management (enclosed)

V. Advocacy

a. Legislative Update

Layne's superintendent report gave the Legislative update. The universal free meals was tied to the state budget which the Governor vetoed so it is still under discussion.

VI. Consent Agenda (4.2)

- a. Approve Minutes from OSSD Regular meeting on 5/10/2023 (enclosed with agenda)
- b. Approve Minutes from OSSD Special meeting on 5/26/2023 (enclosed with agenda)
- c. Approve Professional Contracts for 2023-2024 (new hire list enclosed)
- d. Approve Administrator Contracts for 2023-2024 (list enclosed)
- e. Approve Arbitrage for 2023-2024 (form enclosed)

A motion was made to authorize the Board Chair, Hannah Arias, to sign the required documents for the Tax/Revenue Anticipation Note at Community Bank

By: Megan Sault  
Seconded by: Sam Hooper  
Motion passed: Yes, unanimous

- f. Approve Professional Staff Agreement for 2023-2025 (enclosed)
- g. Approval for the Superintendent to Sign New Professional Staff Contracts during the summer
- h. Approval of Facilities Reserve Funds requests (forms enclosed)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

By: Megan Sault  
Seconded by: Sam Hooper  
Motion passed: Yes

VII. Closing

- a. Superintendent's Report (enclosed) was reviewed.
- b. Principals' & Director Reports (newsletter links sent out separately)
- c. Financials (enclosed)  
We are in good shape. Grant funding is drying up. Estimated surplus \$785,000.

Incidental Information: Climate & Exit Survey by Layne and Survey sent out by the Union.

The board asked about advisory panels. It was suggested that the principals attend a board meeting at the beginning of the school year regarding the topic of advisory panels as that is when they are formed.

Action Items Recap: Monday at noon revisions to Chelsea due for the letter to the community  
Special board meeting on July 5 - Hannah will work with Linda on that agenda  
Chelsea will contact VSBA to set up a contract for the superintendent evaluation process

VIII. Executive Session: Personnel, Real Estate & Student

7:58 p.m. A motion was made by Chelsea Sprague & seconded by Megan Sault to enter Executive Session to discuss Personnel, Real Estate & Student with the superintendent present and assistant superintendent. Motion passed.  
9:07 p.m. The board exited Executive Session.  
No Action was taken.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Katja Evans and seconded by Rachel Gaidys to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Lubold, Board Clerk

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Agenda Planning Meeting: Monday, July 24, 2023 @ OSSD - 6 p.m.

Regular Meeting: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 @ Braintree Elementary School - 6 p.m.