

## WORK SESSION MINUTES

A Work Session of the Springfield School District No. 19 Board of Education was held on October 23, 2023.

### 1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Board Chair Light called the Springfield Board of Education work session to order at 5:30 p.m.

- A. Chair Light led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. Chair Light asked Director Hernandez to share the following Land Acknowledgement:

*We acknowledge that we are in the traditional homeland of the Kalapuya people, specifically the community that was known as Chifin, the area that we now call Springfield.*

*Kalapuya people, who have lived in this region since "[Time Immemorial](#)", were illegally dispossessed of their land and forcibly removed to what are now the Grand Ronde and Siletz reservations over several years, but most notably in treaties between 1851 and 1855.*

*The Kalapuya are now members of the [Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde](#) and the [Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians](#), and members of the Kalapuya still live, work, study, and thrive in this area, and continue to make important contributions here in Springfield, across the land we now refer to as Oregon, and around the globe.*

*This information is shared out of a responsibility to honor the heritage and the humanity of all people and to promote unity within our school district.*

### Attendance

Board Members in attendance included Board Chair Jonathan Light, Board Vice Chair Kelly Mason, Emilio Hernandez, Ken Kohl and Nicole De Graff.

District staff and community members identified included Superintendent Todd Hamilton, David Collins, Brett Yancey, Dustin Reese, Whitney McKinley, Taylor Madden, Martie Steigleder, Brian Richardson, Jeff Michna, Jonathan Gault, Joyce Johnson, Brian Megert and Jonathan Gault, Cliff Schutte.

### 2. DISCUSSION

#### A. Board Policy Review; School Board Member Visits to Schools

Chair Light shared that there had been a great deal of material provided to the board regarding school board member visits. He reminded the Board that this came about when he was unable to visit one of the schools. In looking at the operating agreement, it referred him to the Board policy, but the Board policy lacks clarity and definition in some cases. Light feels it is important that practice follows policy and that those are in alignment. He was interested in the reflections of the Board members and whether or not they viewed school visits as something important. The Policy BG is the main policy in question, regarding the terms; official and unofficial. He outlined that they would be discussing the difference between the terms, official and unofficial school visits and formal and informal school visits.

Director De Graff feels it is important to attend the public events, as well as having introductions to staff. She was interested to discuss the topic, as things may have changed since the pandemic. De Graff was wondering how exactly the policy needed changing and the channels they would take to amend it. She

suggested the topic be moved to the Board Retreat, where they may obtain new ideas and input on the matter.

Vice Chair Mason echoed De Graff, adding that she finds it helpful to visit the school buildings for visualization when making decisions or learning about specific issues related to a particular building. In reference to recent school shootings she said, for security reasons we should contact the administrators prior to our visit and have our presence verified upon arrival so that the teachers are aware of who we are among this space for children. Whenever she has let them know that she wished to visit a school, they have always immediately accommodated her request. Mason believes they may each just have varying philosophies on what their presence in the school means. She asked Superintendent Hamilton if it would be appropriate to have the current visitation policy looked at by OSBA to see if changes are needed.

Director Hernandez shared that in his experience, Board members should not be able to walk into whatever school whenever they like. Principals must be given a 24-hour notice and not be offended if they are told that a particular day is not good for the teachers and students. We are elected officials, he noted, but that does not give us the keys to every building without permission by the house owner. Hernandez suggested they seek the advice of their legal counsel before doing anything.

Chair Light agreed with the giving of notice to administration prior to arrival and said that he had done just that, in the incident in question. He did not quite understand the safety issue, noting that as elected officials one of their responsibilities is to align resources with need. That is the key element of gathering information as far as knowing the workings of the program, which is stated in policy KK. Chair Light stated that he would like to reference the language used in other districts and ask if they have found it necessary to change their language. He concluded, saying they would use De Graff's suggestion to move the topic to the Board Retreat agenda, while they wait to hear from OSBA on the policy analysis.

Director Kohl feels that the more informed as Board members are, the more effective they can be, but believes the process has worked well and does not see a problem with the way it currently is. Kohl asked Superintendent Hamilton if they need to have legal counsel review changes to the policy.

Superintendent Hamilton replied that generally when policies are changed, it is made at the recommendation of the Oregon School Board Association (OSBA). They send us policy updates based on changes in law, changes in best-practice and when we initiate a policy change. We would need to run any policy changes by OSBA. Hamilton replied to Mason's question of having the present visitation policy looked over by OSBA; we would be happy to ask OSBA to do a policy analysis specifically on visitations and the terms, official, unofficial and formal and informal.

### **C. Board Work Sessions & Retreat: Future Topics**

Chair Light explained that this item would become a regular item on the agenda, to be used for Board members to offer suggestion(s) and or comment(s) for future topics at their Board meetings, Board work sessions or Board retreats. It does not have to be limited to action items.

Director Kohl commented that as a new Board member, it has been quite a learning experience. He would like to receive a monthly report on student benchmarks, how they were doing and what can be done to close the gap. Kohl would like to know how each school is doing, as a district in relation to the other districts in Oregon.

Director De Graff referenced the essential skills requirement that had been removed; she would like to receive a report on what the district is doing as far as that goes, including information on student benchmarks in reading and literacy rates and graduation requirements, to be used as a topic for future

consideration. As a retreat agenda, she felt it may be helpful to revisit the OSBA orientation manual, guidelines for Board communication, such as mutual trust, respect and code of conduct.

Chair Light felt that was an excellent suggestion made by De Graff, stating that essential skills and student benchmarks could be revisited annually or even semi-annually. He would like to expand on the criteria, to look at it in a more holistic style of approach. The Board should have the opportunity to weigh in on what kind of data works or what each Board member would like to see. A possible discussion item on the next agenda would be to start giving Dave and staff a baseline data idea of what they are asking and whether or not that can be easily done.

Other such topics for consideration:

- Student data within our student behavior and data population.
- Create some type of structure for Listening Sessions so that people can feel heard.

Back-log issues were:

- To request information on the Mount Vernon Testing program, with a follow-through of a completed environmental test.
- The naming of the Hamlin Sports Complex.
- Understanding the financial ramifications of running the Hamlin Sports Complex and also to discuss the lack of facility signage.

Dave Collins commented that they actually already provide all of these datasets in different forms. From an instructional lens, he shared that this is the work they do on a daily basis, not one-time or quarterly. Some of the datasets happen after some of them are a year or two years old. They would be happy to communicate with the Board what they believe to be best practices and positive things for kids.

Director Hernandez stated he did not want to put more work on the school buildings to provide these extra reports. He suggested that benchmark reports might be provided quarterly instead of monthly. It would be difficult to add another report or statistical report to the building to satisfy the local board.

Director Mason stated she did not have a specific topic, but is always interested in DEI and equity issues. She would like updates on what Taylor is doing, the new equity committee and what is happening in our schools. Mason suggested using a Doodle Poll with open times, allowing for Board members to select when they are available for meeting times and Board retreats, as well as for listing these suggested topic ideas.

The Board agreed upon:

- November was a non-starter for scheduling.
- The Doodle Poll would be used from December going forward.
- The Board Retreat to be held on a Saturday, with a half-day session.

### **3. NEXT MEETINGS**

The next Board meetings will be:

Business Meeting, November 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.  
Business Meeting, December 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Chair Light adjourned the work session at 6:49 p.m.

*(Minutes recorded/transcribed by Trenay Ryan, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG))*