

ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**School Board Work Session and Executive Session
Followed by brief Regular Session
Central Office Board Room
1419 NW Valley View Drive
Roseburg, Oregon 97471
Available via Zoom**

Vol 5 No. 14

February 21, 2024

Board Members:

Rodney D. Cotton, Chair
Steve Hammerson Zoom
Rev. Howard Johnson, Vice-Chair
Ann Krimetz
Michael Leone
Andrea Miner
Andrew Shirtcliff Exc.

Administration:

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent
Michelle Knee, Assistant Superintendent
Cheryl Northam, Director of Finance and Operations
Melissa Roberts, Director of Student Services
Jill Weber, Director of Teaching and Learning

SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION

TIME/PLACE: A meeting of the Douglas County School District No. 4 Board of Directors was convened on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 1419 NW Valley View Drive in Roseburg, Oregon, in person and available via Zoom link.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board Chair, Rodney D. Cotton, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and invited Assistant Superintendent Michelle Knee to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Cotton also advised the audience that Board meetings are recorded for future viewing and to please silence cell phones. He expressed hope that Director Hammerson would feel better soon and thanked everyone for coming out to support this work.

ATTENDANCE: Board members and Cabinet members attended in person, except for Director Steve Hammerson, who attended via Zoom, and Director Andrew Shirtcliff, was excused. No media representatives announced themselves.

REVIEW OF AGENDA / COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Superintendent Cordon welcomed everyone present in person, as well as those who were joining the meeting remotely.

OREGON STATE ASSESSMENT DATA FOR ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Slide deck attached)

Before introducing Assistant Superintendent Knee and Teaching and Learning Director, Dr. Jill Weber, Superintendent Cordon thanked everyone involved in creating the District’s Strategic Plan, our North Star which supports us in ensuring that we are designing an educational system that is focused on students and their growth. Student assessment data helps us identify where we are improving as well as areas where we need to get better. Focusing on all students must include achievement if we are to determine if we are moving them

forward academically. We thank our Board and invite everyone to wonder with us as we use this information to organize our budget and professional learning.

Asst. Superintendent Michelle Knee thanked the Board for their investment in our instructional framework to support the goals of the Strategic Plan. The center of the Plan states that all students will receive the care, support and instruction needed to graduate from high school with plans for their most successful futures. Instruction is aligned within all four areas of the Plan, including;

- 1) Appropriate and Timely Instruction
 - Our teachers will have the resources needed to effectively support and scaffold student learning.
- 2) Effective Operations
 - We will align district resources and establish data-informed systems to support exceptional learning environments.
- 3) Safe and Inclusive
 - Our school environment will ensure everyone feels safe, seen, heard and respected.
- 4) Leadership Development
 - Our leaders will have the tools to be exceptional instructional leaders.

Michelle recapped the work with the 5D Instructional Framework that began four years ago as we partnered with the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership during the pandemic years when a lot of work was done with training via Zoom. Professional learning has been provided to administrators in the five dimensions of instruction creating a shared language for instruction that grounds teaching and learning in classroom environment and culture, student engagement, curriculum and pedagogy, assessment for student learning and purpose. Feedback is provided to teachers to support their growth, which in turn supports the growth of students. Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT) have been established at all schools with training provided. This year, focus has been on the instructional framework as well as the teacher evaluation rubric. Dr. Jill Weber and Asst. Supt. Knee met with each principal to review last year's school report cards to learn what is needed to be included in improvement plans in the areas of ELA, Literacy, Math and Graduation. Each school's principal has been working on creating goals within their school community that are tied directly to the Strategic Plan.

Teaching and Learning Director, Dr. Jill Weber, shared the purpose of student assessments are:

- To know and understand 100% of our students' academic skills and needs
- To ensure they are learning and growing
- To inform our next steps; challenge, accelerate, support

Dr. Weber described assessments by type, including:

- ❖ **Diagnostic** – Diagnostic assessment is the use of multiple measures and reports to identify student strengths and needs in specific skill areas. With this information, teachers can provide instruction to properly address learning needs. (DIBELS, iReady, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), and Program)
- ❖ **Formative** – Formative assessment provides feedback and information during the instructional process, while learning is taking place, and while learning is occurring. Formative assessment measures student progress but it can also assess your own progress as an instructor. (DIBELS, iReady, HMH, and Program)
- ❖ **Summative** – Summative assessment is usually applied at the end of the learning processes and is the

assessment of the learning. It often is given a number, grade, or weight as a result of the assessment by Oregon's State Assessment System (OSAS) in English Language, Math and Science.

Noting the importance of knowing where students are in skills and knowledge, data in the areas of Math and Reading for the Fall and Winter semesters was shared, along with On Track for Graduation data spanning several years to help teachers challenge and accelerate their students. The goal is for every student to have growth of at least a year, if not more. It was further emphasized that teachers are often challenged to differentiate instruction across a broad spectrum of student knowledge and skill sets. This means that a teacher may need to differentiate what could be 5-6 years of students who are above and under grade level.

To continue advancing student growth, Dr. Weber outlined the numerous professional learning opportunities being offered to RPS leaders and educators as we strive to make sure our students graduate from high school with plans for their most successful futures. These include instructional areas within Mathematics, ELA/Reading, On-Track Graduation and Instruction – 5D.

The Board presented numerous questions to Dr. Weber and once all were answered, the meeting was recessed at 6:59 p.m.

RECESS: Chair Cotton offered a brief recess from 6:59 to 7:05 p.m.

INSIGHTS TO RACISM – CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS **IMPACTING OUR KIDS AND COMMUNITY**

Tonight's sharing of his personal insights and learnings experienced as a local resident over the past 35 years is an effort to promote mutual acceptance and understanding. Community members have encouraged our Board and District to learn more about the variety of experiences our children receive while in our care. Rev. Johnson's willingness to take this first step in discussing bias and racism in our community is incredibly appreciated by his colleagues and the district, and we will continue this essential work.

Board Vice-Chair, Reverend Howard Johnson, first shared a disclaimer, noting that the opinions he was about to share belonged to him and not the Board. Nor do they represent the church where he has served as pastor for 35 years out of an accumulative 85 years of life. He expressed a purpose of making others aware of cultural differences of we, as Americans, as he shared his personal insights and learnings experienced as a local resident over the past 35 years. Rev. Johnson outlined cultural differences and viewpoints that often result in distrust and dislike among our fellow citizens. He also honored his wife of what will be 48 years on April 1st.

Reverend Johnson proceeded to share a list of instructions that black Americans may tell their children, essentially a list of Do's and Don'ts. For example:

- ✚ No matter how emotional you become, remain calm to avoid a label of "angry black person" or judged wrongly.
- ✚ Request a bag and receipt to avoid accusations of stealing.
- ✚ When living in a majority "white" community, approach a store clerk and ask a question to avoid having store personnel following you.
- ✚ Don't wear college logo jackets. Keep in mind he attended college on an academic scholarship, not an athletic one.
- ✚ In Oklahoma, out of 57 all-black cities, nine remain.
- ✚ Non-residents reported do not exit the freeway in Roseburg to purchase fuel, instead travel to either

Eugene or Grants Pass.

- ✦ A black American new to a white neighborhood walks in the middle of the street, not getting near to the houses, and wear reflective clothing. Do not look at homes.
- ✦ Taught to be an overachiever. No one expected him to be smart or well spoken. Some people are shocked to learn he can verbalize thoughts and multi-syllable words.
- ✦ Father instructed him to keep license and insurance cards available and not to reach for the glove compartment.
- ✦ Never place your hands in your pocket while in a store. Keep your hands visible.
- ✦ Never enter an elevator if the only other person is not a person of color.

Vice-Chair Johnson related that in 1921 in Tulsa, Oklahoma an entire community of 330 black Americans was destroyed. This is not taught in school.

Mr. Johnson's daughter is of mixed race. In public when she accompanies her mother, she is treated as "white". When accompanied by her father, she is treated as "black".

More examples included:

- ✦ Regardless of the temperature, never wear a hoodie. If you do, keep it off your head.
- ✦ Censor the music you listen to, to avoid being judged a "thug". Recently he heard an announcer call Richard Sherman a "thug". Mr. Sherman has a civil engineering degree from Stanford University.
- ✦ Keep sufficient distance when standing in line with a white woman to avoid contact.
- ✦ Never tell a store clerk you are just "looking".
- ✦ "Business Casual" means full business attire.
- ✦ Never let black children play with guns.
- ✦ Expect to apologize regardless of who may be at fault.

Rev. Johnson prefers to be referred to as Black American, but he has experienced other monikers including Colored, Negro, Nigger, African American, Person of Color, etc. He noted that his forbearers were here when others showed up.

For children growing up, it's a challenging time for buying the right color clothing. The wrong color can be assumed to be gang related. OSU Beaver orange can be interpreted to be gang-related in Portland. There are reportedly six active gangs in Roseburg.

Things others may not think are important, to him are acts of racism.

It's not my job to fix racism – I'm not racist.

"When you say you don't see color..."; you've got to see color.

You don't have to worry about the police if you are not doing anything wrong.

(In 1989 he was pulled over while riding his motorcycle in Roseburg. The officer is now a professional friend.)

I don't want to post anything on racism – afraid of the backlash.

I don't have white privilege.

Not sure when I should discuss race with my children.

I have "black" friends.

A pastor's wife shared; Black people come to our church.

White people will ask him if he knows a particular black person in Roseburg.

He doesn't know them all unless they have something in common – a shared interest.

Black Americans see racism with the speed of light. White people see it slow as molasses in the winter.

When his family moved here in 1989, there were five black families. His was number six. Four months later three of them had been run out of town. Rev. Johnson stated that he's still here, and Roseburg is his home. He

made a choice. The U.S. freed slaves in 1863. It was also the year that the Ku Klux Klan was formed. A fellow pastor once shared with him that in the late 60s or early 70s, the Klan walked in full regalia down Jackson Street. It's a rough town, but it's his home.

Howard and his wife have often have discussions about racists acts. Those discussions and differences of opinion lead to better understanding.

Members of the board shared various experiences of being white or non-white. Rev. Johnson shared that if he can make a difference or make this world better, give me my shot.

IWWCW

(In what way can we solve the problem?)

Howard commented that every site has a safety committee. He believes it should include students, parents and administrators tasked to investigate allegations of sex, race or economic discrimination and respond back to the principal for follow-up. We have policies that need to be followed. Treat racism like a heart attack that if left untreated, the patient will die.

If we start conversations where we take off each other's glasses, egos and ask what we can do to make sure every student gets the care and instruction needed to graduate with plans for their most successful futures, we, as a community, should make every effort to do that. His personal goal is for every child who comes to Roseburg to walk away saying they received the best quality care and support possible. That no matter where they go, they can say they are from Roseburg and not be ashamed. Rev. Johnson shared his hope that this conversation has perked your interest. He encouraged everyone to, when in doubt, reach out a hand and shake it. Smile. Just talk. He believes God had a sense of humor sending him to Roseburg. He ended by saying, "You are my family, my community. I made a choice. My children did not have a choice as I brought them here against their will. My wife and I are blessed. Thank you for being in love with me."

Chair Cotton shared that on December 13, 2023, we heard from two families whose children were recipients of bias and racism. It can't be easy for families to approach a school board to report this kind of painful experience. It's equally hard for a board and district to hear and acknowledge it. Speakers asked the Board to learn more about what is going on, and how to confront it on a district level so that children can feel safe in our schools.

Our Strategic Plan tasks us with: *Our school environments will ensure everyone feels safe, seen, heard and respected.* Vice-Chair Howard Johnson has agreed to take the initial step in addressing this unacceptable situation in our schools. Over the years, he has been asked to present to various groups to help them understand the impact that words, behaviors, and actions have on others. He has been preparing information to share with you to better our understanding. Again, this is our first step in addressing bias in our district. It definitely will not be the last.

Our sincere appreciation of Rev. Johnson's willingness to venture into what many consider to be uncomfortable territory. We also appreciate your willingness to listen with an open mind and heart.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS:

Superintendent Cordon thanked individuals for being present both in person and via Zoom. He shared that parents entrust their most valuable possession, their children, with us and that as superintendent, his responsibility is to assure that they can be welcomed into the classroom and feel loved and respected every

day. Mr. Cordon also acknowledged that we continue to fight against the negative effects of social media and Tik Tok and further reminded us that the most important lessons children learn are those taught at home by their most important teachers, their parents. He expressed a sincere desire and expectation that we work together to address negative bias and behaviors as a community. We look forward to inviting individuals to help us make sure that our classrooms and our community are a welcoming place for all.

ADJOURN REGULAR SESSION: With work session presentations and discussion concluded, Chair Cotton announced that the board would be convening in executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d) and (i) and expected to reconvene following discussion. The regular meeting was recessed at 7:45 p.m.

Executive Session

Pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d) and (i)

Chairman Cotton convened Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d) at 7:50 p.m. to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations. That session was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Chair Cotton then convened Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(i) to review Superintendent Cordon's self-reflection as part of the Board/Superintendent check-in process.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION: With discussion concluded, the Executive Session was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

RECONVENE REGULAR SESSION

The Board reconvened in regular session. Vice-Chair Howard Johnson made a motion to add one additional year to Superintendent Jared Cordon's employment contract. Director Andrea Miner seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Board Chair Rodney Cotton announced that it was his pleasure to announce the extension of Superintendent Jared Cordon's employment contract for an additional year. He added that Superintendent Cordon continues to lead our district with a student-first vision aligned to our Strategic Plan. Under his guidance, our schools are becoming safer, more engaging, and more effective teaching and learning environments for our community's children.

M5-047 Approved adding one additional year to Superintendent Jared Cordon's employment contract.
--

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent

JPC/jlk

Next Meeting: Board Meeting, March 13, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Melrose Elementary School, 2960 Melrose Road in Roseburg, Oregon and available via Zoom.