



**May 1, 2023
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Regular Session
5:30 p.m.**

MEETING LOCATION- 455 Adams Ave, Cottage Grove
[Zoom Link Click Here](#)

The South Lane School Board appreciates hearing from our citizens. We value the ideas, opinions, questions, concerns, suggestions and input from parents and community members. The Board of Directors allows time on their agenda for testimony regarding a published agenda item to its designated place on the agenda. A visitor may introduce another topic not on the published agenda during Public Comment. The Board Chair usually allows three minutes per speaker.

South Lane SD Board of Directors have now opened their Board Room to the Public to view their sessions with limited seating. Citizens are still invited to join the Board meeting online. Meetings will also be broadcast on South Lane Community Broadcasting 14.4. If you wish to speak to the Board, about an agenda item or another topic, please use the sign up sheet outside the Board Room prior to the meeting or submit an email request to public.comment@slane.k12.or.us to the Board Secretary prior to noon on the day of the Board meeting. Request to speak must include the following:
Full name, address, email address, date, agenda item or topic. If you want to submit written testimony, either attach a separate document or include the message in the email request.

Board meetings by Oregon State statute are public, in order for citizens to observe the Board conducting the district business. The meetings are not opportunities for the public to join the Board's discussion. For this reason, when public testimony is provided, Board members do not respond or interact with those providing testimony. This process is often confusing and feels like the Board is unresponsive, but this process is a legal process. If a question is asked, the Superintendent will follow up or ask a Cabinet member to follow-up to respond on her behalf

For additional information contact:South Lane District Office (541) 942-3381 (phone) * (541) 942-8098 (fax)



Meeting Date: May 1, 2023

- I. Call to Order
- II. Agenda Review
- III. Consent Agenda (Action)
 1. 4-3 Draft Minutes
 2. 4-24 Draft Minutes
 3. Policy Section K/L- District-Community Relations*Attached
 4. Out of State Trip Al Kennedy High School –San Francisco
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Reports/Discussion
 1. Student Representative Report
 2. OSEA Representative Report
 3. SLEA Representative Report
 4. CCS & Family Services–Presentation
- VI. Administrative Reports/Discussion
 1. Superintendent Update
 2. Payroll Update
 3. Morale Survey Questions 2023
- VII. Upcoming Dates
 - May 22, 2023, Budget Committee Meeting
 - May 30, 2023, 2nd Budget Committee Meeting 'Potential'
 - June 1, 2023, Board Retreat
 - June 5, 2023, Board Regular Session
 - June 12, 2023, Public Hearing
- VIII. Board of Directors Correspondence/Reports
 - Future Agenda Items
- IX. Adjournment



SOUTH LANE SCHOOL DISTRICT 45J3

Children Come First • Always Learning, Teaching, Caring • Safe, Respectful, and, Inclusive Schools & Community

Meeting Minutes for Meeting on: April 3, 2023

[Agenda/Minutes/Meetings Published to View](#)

Board Members Present:

Colleen Valley
Dustin Bengtson
Gary Mort
Jerry Settlemeyer
Sherry Duerst-Higgins
Tammy Hodgkinson
Taylor Wilhour

Student Representatives Present:
Alannah Bailey- AKHS

Call to Order and Flag Salute

Board Chair Dustin Bengtson called the meeting to order and led the flag salute at 5:30 p.m.

Public Welcome

Chairman Bengtson welcomed the public and reviewed the Agenda.

Consent Agenda (Action)

1. 3-6 Draft Minutes
2. 3-20 Draft Minutes
3. Out-of-State Trip Lincoln Middle School –New York, DC & Philly
*Teachers Mr. Bellizzi and Ms. Kerns enthusiastically shared some finer details of the Lincoln trip which they raised over \$30,000 and will have 42 students attending.

Board Member Duerst-Higgins made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with Board Member Mort seconding the motion. The motion was passed with a unanimous vote.



Public Comment

Bonnie Sano- Spoke on Observations (Meetings, Overheard and Shared).

Logan Overton- Spoke on Oregon Health Standards.

Bryan Parsons- Spoke on Oregon Health Standards.

Reports/Discussion

Click the link above to view all Representative Reports in detail.

1. OSEA Representative Report – Not Present
2. SLEA Representative Report- Emily Quindry introduced herself and gave an update on recent communications from teachers.
3. Student Representative Report- Alannah Bailey AKHS gave an update on recent Field Trips.
4. Health Curriculum and Standards- Mr. Hamilton and Principal Gerick provided a Board Report on the Health standards and curriculum requirements. A plan will be presented in a future meeting.
5. Six Initiatives ODE Presentation- Mr. McCasline, Principals Bechen and Drew along with Teachers Ms. Guest, and Ms. Bellizzi presented a Powerpoint of the Plan. Board Members Hodgkinson and Valley had also been a part of the process and were able to share an appreciation for the work efforts after the presentation.

Board Member Settelmeyer made a motion to approve the Six Initiatives Integrated Plan with Board Member Duerst-Higgins seconding the motion. The motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

Chairman Bengston called a 10-minute Break

6. Dorena PLC Presentation- Principal Pixton along with teachers Ms. Buehler, Ms. Rohman, and Ms. Stepp shared from the Powerpoint some key points of their Small Community with a Big Heart 'Dorena School' ~ Where they Focus on Positivity & Encouragement. The Mission Statement that states Everyone will Belong & Thrive was clear as the PowerPoint progressed and the enthusiasm for the implementation from the PLC Conference and training has already improved teacher teams and student data.



7. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Presentation -SEL Lead, Devan Pixton shared the SEL Plan and then introduced the South Lane team of counselors at each school along with their dream for their school in the next five years.
PowerPoint provided
8. Pre-School Promise Presentation – Pre-School Promise Administrator Barnett introduced herself and the progression of Pre-School in South Lane. In 2016 we had just two buildings, Bohemia and Dorena serving students now all elementary buildings have a PK class and South Lane SD serves 83 students.
PowerPoint provided.
9. Board Communication/Community Engagement -The Board is planning to develop a Board Goal around community engagement – this will be part of the engagement process/strategy included in our integrated guidance plan.

Administrative Reports/Discussion

1. Superintendent Update- Dr. Curtis provided her report.
2. Payroll Update- Ms. Gowing provided her report

Business (Action Items)

1. 2021-2022 Audit Presentation, ~~Kori Sarrett-Accuity LCC- action~~
Ms. Hall along with Ms. Gowing shared the Audit Findings. Ms. Gowing stated ODE sent an email earlier today stating audits have been accepted by ODE.

Board Member Settlemeyer made a motion to approve the 2021-22 Audit with Board Member Wilhour seconding the motion. The motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

2. 2023-24 Draft School Calendar- *action*

Board Member Settlemeyer made a motion to approve the 2023-24 School Calendar with Board Member Duerst-Higgins seconding the motion. The motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

Upcoming Dates

- April 24, 2023, Budget/Board Committee Special Session
- May 1, 2023, Regular Session
- May 22, 2023, Budget Committee Meeting
- May 30, 2023, 2nd Budget Committee Meeting 'Potential'
- June 12, 2023, Regular Session/Public Hearing



SOUTH LANE SCHOOL DISTRICT 45J3

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Board of Directors Correspondence/Reports

Click the link above to view the Board of Directors Reports.

Adjournment

Chairman Bengtson adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Tonya Kerns, Board Secretary.

Date:

Dustin Bengtson, Board Chair

Dr. Yvonne Curtis, Superintendent



SOUTH LANE SCHOOL DISTRICT 45J3

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Meeting Minutes for Meeting on: April 24, 2023

[Agenda/Minutes/Meetings Published to View](#)

Board Members Present:

Colleen Valley
Dustin Bengtson
Gary Mort
Jerry Settlemeyer
Sherry Duerst-Higgins
Tammy Hodgkinson
Taylor Wilhour

Budget Committee Members Present :

Gary Manly, Tom Perkins, Darby Valley, Jennifer Violette

Student Representatives Present:

Alannah Bailey- AKHS

Call to Order and Flag Salute

Board Vice Chair Taylor Wilhour called the meeting to order and led the flag salute at 5:33 p.m.

Regular Session

Business (Action)

1. 2022-2023 Budget Committee Application Discussion/Approval- Tom Perkins,
Action Item
Tom Perkins Position 1
2. 2023-2024 Budget Committee Member Application for Reappointment, *Action Item*
Chairman Wilhour shared the applications submitted for Reappointment stating we will stagger the terms to align the appointment back to a genuine stagger.
Two-Year Term: Gary Manly & Darby Valley
Three-Year Term: Mike Fleck & Jennifer Violette



SOUTH LANE SCHOOL DISTRICT 45J3

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Board Member Duerst-Higgins made a motion to approve Business items 1 & 2 with Board Member Valley seconding the motion. The motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

Board/Budget Special Session

Budget Process- Budget 101

Business Manager Gowling along with Superintendent Curtis shared the Budget Presentation.

Chairman Wilhour called a 10-minute Break at 7:06 p.m. to excuse the Budget Committee.

Draft Superintendent Goals

Superintendent Curtis provided her Draft Goals for 2023-2024 which will be reviewed again during the August Meeting.

Upcoming Dates

- May 1, 2023, Board Regular Session 5:30
- May 22, 2023, Budget Committee Special Session 5:30
- May 30, 2023, Budget Committee 'potential meeting'
- June 1, 2023, Board Special Session 5:30
- **June 5, 2023, Board Regular Session**
- June 12, 2023, Budget Hearing 5:30

Board of Directors Correspondence/Reports

Click the link above to view the Board of Directors Reports.

Adjournment

Chairman Wilhour adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Tonya Kerns, Board Secretary.

Date:

Dustin Bengtson, Board Chair

Dr. Yvonne Curtis, Superintendent

We are taking a trip to San Fran. in June 19th through the 22nd and needed permission to leave the state from the board.

Can you schedule us in May to do that? I will send the itinerary asap

Thank you so much my amazing friend

Brandi

BOARD MEETING SPEAKER SIGN IN SHEET



Meeting Date: May 1, 2023

A Visitor May Speak on any topic **listed on** the agenda during Public Comment

*Non agenda items may be introduced and considered

There will be public comment after approval of the Consent Agenda for citizens to address the Board. If you wish to address the Board, you must sign-up before the meeting begins. Statements by members of the public should be brief and concise.

- ✓ The Board Chair will call your name when it is your turn to speak.
 - ✓ You will address the Board with your public comment limited to 3 minutes for each individual. Due to time constraints, the board may limit the number of individual comments to those related to Agenda Items.
 - ✓ Please sign below, completing all sections. If not completed fully it may result in the inability of the board to call you for public to be heard.
 - ✓ When called, please state your name, relationship to district, place of residence and the subject which you will address.
 - ✓ *If you would like to address the Board on a topic not on the Agenda Please submit a request in writing to the Board Secretary
- **Public Comment Request-Non Agenda Item Form.

NAME	ADDRESS	TOPIC	IS TOPIC ON AGENDA?
BAYLOR PARSONS	* emailed	Board Letter	No
LINDSEY PARSONS	* emailed	Community feedback	No
JENNINGS ALBRECHT	* emailed	feeling repressed ^{@ school} personal views	No
BREWE KELSH	* emailed	general observations - former Principal	No



To whom it may concern,

On the 3rd of April, I was sent a letter from Ivonne Cutis and the South Lane School board of directors asking me to stop speaking at board meetings on a particular undefined topic. I cannot comply with this letter for the following reasons:

1. You said that you declined to hear from me on “this topic” any further, but never specified in the letter what topic you were referring to. Are you referring to one of the specific topics I have spoken on such as the inordinately high rate of suicidal ideation among transgender youth that cannot be explained by a lack of social support? Or are you referring to the many irreversible effects of puberty blockers and cross sex hormones? Or perhaps you are referring to the logical inconsistencies of transgender ideology and the belief that a man can be a woman and vice versa. Maybe you want to silence speech about the sexual molestation you invite into our schools with shared spaces such as bathrooms, locker rooms, and dorm rooms. Is it that you don’t want me to talk about how South Lane intends to hide information from parents regarding their child’s transition at school? Or are you talking more broadly? Am I no longer allowed to mention the issue of transgenderism? I mentioned this at the last board meeting after having received your letter, yet I was allowed to speak. I can only assume then that it must be one of these more specific issues you are referring to, but I do not know what.
2. According to your letter, my “feedback to the board has been hurtful and offensive to some staff and students.” I do not doubt that. I have been well aware that what I have shared would be offensive to some, but it has never been my intention to offend. Rather I come to inform people of what is actually happening in South Lane and in our society more broadly. When a person is offended, it is necessary to determine if the offender was speaking the truth. If the content of the speech was true, then their offense may not be at the person at all. Rather they are offended at the truth itself. I would challenge any member of this board or the community to find anything I have ever said that is not factually accurate. If you can do so, I will happily correct my statements at the next board meeting. To be offended at the truth is to kick against the goads. As Winston Churchill once said, “The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.” The claim that my comments are offensive ignores the fact that many parents and students are offended by your policies as you will see tonight from the letters you will receive from parents who are outraged. To say that speech must be limited based on its offensiveness is to say that there should be no speech. Your letter itself was offensive to many people who have had the opportunity to read it. I am not easily offended. If there was something offensive to me in this letter, it is that you assumed that I am so feckless that a simple letter would dissuade me from speaking up on behalf of the safety of students.
3. You claim in your letter that you are obligated to “act in ways that are consistent with welcoming all students”. This double speak misses the fact that you are engaged in the most unwelcoming of actions. When a child loathes their own body to the extent that they feel that they cannot live with aspects of it, the least welcoming thing to do is to agree with them and encourage them on this pathway through the use of gender

affirming pronouns and hiding information from their parents. The only welcoming thing to do is to lovingly steer them back toward acceptance of their body.

4. You claim in your letter that “[t]he Board has no desire to shift our stance on safe, respectful and inclusive schools.” I do not think you know what those words mean. How can you claim that it is safe to encourage a child to socially transition at a young age knowing that they will have to receive harmful drugs that have known and common harmful side effects such as permanent sterilization, ongoing uterine pain, increased risk of cancer, lower bone density, halted brain growth, and higher rates of self harm and suicidality? This is not to mention the surgeries that may one day result. The only way this can be considered safe is if you believe that a fleeting feeling of safety among our students should be prioritized above their actual physical safety. As stated above, to agree with a student in their transgender self diagnosis is to participate in rejecting their body. This is neither respectful nor inclusive.
5. You said in your letter “[w]e are committed to creating an environment where all students feel safe to learn and seek support to grow and thrive.” If this is the case, then you need to listen to the stories of students in South Lane who try to hold their pee all day at school because when they use the restroom, someone of the opposite sex walks in on them. This is a true story of students in South Lane. These children and parents are too scared to speak up for fear of being labeled a transphobe or losing a job, but they were not too scared to tell me. Thankfully my sense of self preservation is outweighed by my desire to protect children which has made me an advocate for these parents and children. This is one reason I cannot stop speaking.
6. In your letter, you welcome me to submit written testimony rather than speaking at the board meeting. This is not good enough. I do not trust that this board will read my letters. I have addressed some of the issues you brought up in your letter to me before in my letters, yet you did not clarify your comments. This indicates to me that many of you do not read the letters you receive. I was in a meeting in which only one member, Taylor Wilhour, had reviewed a document that contained an appraisal of the needed building upgrades. He spotted glaring problems that no other board member saw apparently because they had not reviewed the material. I encourage you to change this habit, because tonight, you will be receiving many letters from stakeholders in your community who need to be heard.
7. Finally, one thing this letter makes clear is that this board appears to be perfectly ideologically aligned. So long as that is the case, it is the duty of stakeholders such as myself to interject opposing viewpoints.

For the reasons stated above, I fully intend to ignore every aspect of your letter to me.

Respectfully,

Bryan Parsons

Subject **Board Meeting Public Comment**
From Tonya Kerns <tonya.kerns@slane.k12.or.us>
To Bryan Parsons <bryan.parsons@slane.k12.or.us>
Date 04/03/23 10:31



**Sending for South Lane School Board of Directors*

Dear Mr. Parsons,

The South Lane School Board values information from stakeholders that helps the board understand issues, concerns and the performance of our school District. As a board, we evaluate the input on the specifics of the issue and what, if any, action there is for the board to consider. We also have a responsibility to manage our business meetings in a way that is consistent with our policy of safe, respectful and inclusive schools.

We have heard from you on multiple occasions including time spent with you by multiple board members to determine what action, if any, should be referred to the board or school district. Based on our understanding of your concerns, the actions you propose would be inconsistent with our position on equity and inclusion or are outside of the School Board's level of authority to change.

Recently, it has been brought to our attention that your feedback to the board has been hurtful and offensive to some staff and students. Regardless of your intent, we have an obligation to listen to those concerns and act in ways that are consistent with welcoming all students, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, ability, language, gender or sexual orientation.

The Board has no desire to shift our stance on safe, respectful and inclusive schools. We believe that we are acting consistently with the law. We are committed to engaging students and families with the support of our teachers and trained counselors so that children safely navigate complicated issues in their lives. We are committed to creating an environment where all students feel safe to learn and seek support to grow and thrive.

With that in mind we see no policy action for the board based on your concerns and as such, we decline to hear further testimony from you on this subject. You continue to be welcome to submit written comments to the board and they will be recognized as part of the permanent record of the board meetings.

Respectfully,

South Lane SD Board of Directors

Dr. Yvonne Curtis

May 1, 2023

To Superintendent Curtis and the South Lane School Board:

The board has stated that its goal is creating “safe, respectful and inclusive schools...where all students feel safe to learn.” The board has also stated that it “values information from stakeholders,” and has even attempted to silence one of its own staff members when his feedback was offensive to a few individuals. In this instance, the board proved it is capable of swiftly responding to individual complaints. Yet in other instances where community members raised concerns about policies and curriculum, the board has chosen to not act at all. It appears that the board is only concerned about the complaints from certain people, and not others. This unequal treatment has created a growing sense of distrust, fear, and outrage in the community. More families are considering removing their children from the schools, if they have not already.

I have spent the past few months gathering feedback from the community. Some of them have bravely written letters which I submitted today. Others are so afraid or angry that they could not make a comment to the board. Here are the actions that this community expects to see from the board in order to restore trust and create “safe, respectful, and inclusive schools.”

Build better communication between the board and the community:*

*Under the recent threat, this is a challenge. Under normal circumstances, the district should:

1. **Find a larger venue for board meetings that is more accessible.** The district office has limited parking and seating capacity, and many parents do not even know where it is. Our schools have ample room and are easier to access, and would be a better venue for a meeting that includes the community. When parents take the time to come to a meeting, and are shuffled to an overflow room to see it on a screen with poor sound quality, why did they come in the first place? And when it happens for 7 months in a row, and the district does not find a larger place....you can see how it communicates that the board does not value community participation.
2. **Reserve seats only for parents and community members.** Often the seats become filled with presenters on agenda items. But if you want to communicate that you value parents and community members, you will make sure there is space for them.
3. **Invite the community to be involved in the board meetings.** Many people are surprised to know they are allowed to attend board meetings, give a public comment, or ask a question. It is too hard for people to find the information. The district should invite parents to attend board meetings each month in advance, and also to offer the link to the zoom room.
4. **Vow to never limit public comment.** You have regularly said how you have “a lot of important business” in your meetings, but what could be more important than hearing the feedback from your stakeholders? While some viewers may not agree with the public

comments, that is not a reason to limit speech. Those who do not agree ought to come and voice their concerns also. *The community must commit to remain non-violent and non-disruptive in order for communication to be productive.

5. **Create an anonymous way to share concerns and comments, and invite the community to use it.** Many people are not aware of the complaint form, and it takes some digging to find it on your web site. Some parents and staff are terrified of backlash if they speak up. Every school newsletter and web site should offer a link to anonymous feedback.

Require greater transparency between schools and parents:

1. **Require teachers to show parents all curriculum that will be taught in every subject when a parent requests it.** Many parents have tried to view the curriculum for their child, but they were met with defensiveness from the teacher. They were bounced between the district office and teacher, and never got answers. Some of these parents chose to not enroll their children in the schools. Full disclosure should be required of the teachers, and it will help parents trust the schools once again.
2. **Focus on the basics—reading, writing, and math—instead of shaping identity and sexuality.** This is a huge way the school district can show respect for children from all backgrounds. Since there are such diverse views on what is to be taught to children regarding sexuality and identity, these topics should be left up to the parents as much as possible.
3. **Keep sex ed focused on basic anatomy, abuse prevention, anti-harassment, and abstinence.** Beyond these topics, the content becomes very controversial. In a recent poll on a mother's group page (2K members), the sex ed curriculum was their number one concern. Our district can build trust with parents by emphasizing only the essential health standards, and avoiding the ones full of controversial information.
4. **Make sex ed an “opt in” course rather than an “opt out” course.** Some students are embarrassed to opt-out because they will be teased. Some parents do not check their e-mail in time to opt-out. Parents are afraid their child will be taught things without their knowledge, and this is the best way to calm their fears.
5. **Require teachers to notify parents in advance if any subject will include sexual content, gender theory, or critical race theory.** These theories are in conflict with many families' tightly held beliefs. It enrages parents when they feel their child was taught something controversial without their knowledge. And children have expressed that they are silently offended, but hide their feelings because they are afraid of being bullied. Prior notification will create a learning environment that respects people from all backgrounds.

6. **Create a simplified “opt out” process for parents who do not want their child to participate in lessons or activities in regular subjects.** The current process is that a parent applies for exemption and creates an alternative activity themselves, the school reviews and approves it, and then the board reviews and approves it. This is much too complicated! A simple communication with the teacher should be enough to grant exemption without penalizing the student.

Increase safety for all students at school:

1. **Create safe private spaces (bathrooms/locker rooms) in every school to be used by any student that feels the need for it.** There are students who feel very uncomfortable in the bathrooms, and some who avoid urinating all day long, because of constantly being intruded upon by students of the opposite sex who are posing as transgender. There are students who have experienced sexual traumas and are retraumatized at the mere presence of the opposite sex in their bathroom or locker room. This is neither healthy nor safe!
2. **Commit to tell parents any time a student chooses to change pronouns or bathrooms not in line with their biological sex.** If a student is experiencing confusion, they need their parents involved, and parents have a right to know. In addition, parental involvement will greatly reduce the number of students who are abusing the bathroom policies.
3. **Enforce stricter policies against any cell phone use during school.** Cell phones distract students in class, contribute to social conflicts, and *destroy privacy* in bathrooms.
4. **Do not offer students the option to use sleeping quarters not in-line with their biological sex.** Or at minimum, enact a policy that requires parental permission, and then notify the parents of all the other children about the situation (keeping the child anonymous) so that they can decide if they feel comfortable with that.

The actions listed above are reasonable, legal, and in-line with your stated goal of creating “safe, respectful, inclusive schools.” We realize that you are obligated to comply with Title IX, the Menstrual Dignity Act, and Oregon’s Health Standards for public schools. We are not asking you to break laws, but to realize that you are not obligated to adopt all of the “Guidelines for Supporting Gender Expansive Students” because it does not introduce a new law. Rather, it promotes some “best practices” that are *not best for the silent majority*. It is your lawful purpose to choose which practices to put into place, so that people from all backgrounds feel safe and respected in our schools.

This is the plea from the many parents and community members who are alarmed and outraged, who see the district giving preference to some people and ignoring others, who are willing to drive their kids to a different school district or quit their jobs in order to homeschool. Because for these parents, children really do “come first.”

Sincerely,

Lindsey Parsons, linz.parsons@gmail.com

Along with other concerned individuals:

Aimee Perini, oregon7301@gmail.com

AmyHewlett, Hewlettamy@gmail.com

Emily Timm, emilytimm13@gmail.com

Julie Backman, Julibackman46@gmail.com

Tricia Horner, hornersdta@gmail.com

Terra Whetham Hoy, terrahoy@gmail.com

Will Davey, plattepirate@gmail.com

Jenae Goede, jgoede00@gmail.com

Melanie Stuhmiller, Melanie.stuhmiller@gmail.com

Kimberly Green, kmbrylgrn22@gmail.com

Terri Parsons, Tmp2784@gmail.com

Chris Tina Hernandez, sunshinetina@yahoo.com

Melissa Piebenga, Melissapiebenga2@gmail.com

Morgan Pooler, Poolermorgan81@gmail.com

Jessica Pemberson-Blomquist, JessicaPemberton5687@gmail.com

Jessica Freeman, Jca_617@yahoo.com

Mauri Bennett, mauribennett84@gmail.com

Elena Shore, LCSW Mental Health Therapist, elenashore@gmail.com

...And many more anonymous people who are afraid to be listed publicly.



SOUTH LANE SCHOOL DISTRICT 45J3

Children Come First • Always Learning, Teaching, Caring • Safe, Respectful, and, Inclusive Schools & Community

Dear Lindsay,

*Along with Concerned Individuals – emails within the letter

At the request of the Board, I have read your letter and letters sent by other community members with similar issues. I restated the issues as questions to provide a uniform method for responding to each issue. Please find the answers following each question along with policies or links to additional important information. If you have any remaining questions, please contact me.

All Students Belong

Question: Does “All Students Belong” policy require staff to ask children what gender they identify as?

Answer: As stated in the policy: [ACB All Students Belong](#)

The district prohibits the use or display of any symbols of hate^{5} on [district] [school]^{6} grounds or in any district- or school-sponsored program, service, school or activity that is funded in whole or in part by monies appropriated by the Oregon Legislative Assembly, except where used in teaching curriculum that is aligned to the Oregon State Standards.

In responding to the use of any symbols of hate, the district will use non-disciplinary remedial action whenever appropriate.

The district prohibits retaliation against an individual because that person has filed a charge, testified, assisted or participated in an investigation, proceeding or hearing; and further prohibits anyone from coercing, intimidating, threatening or interfering with an individual for exercising any rights guaranteed under state and federal law.

Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with the lawful use of district facilities pursuant to a lease or license.

The district will use administrative regulation ACB-AR - Bias Incident Complaint Procedure to process reports or complaints of bias incidents.

To learn about how a bias incident must be handled by school personnel, please see the “All Students Belong” administrative rule.

Administrative Rule: [ACB R Bias Incident Complaint Procedure](#)

We also have a non-discrimination policy: [AC Nondiscrimination](#)

Use of Bathrooms and Lockers

Question: What actually is SLSD policy regarding transgender students and bathrooms and locker rooms?

Answer: Students may use any bathroom they choose. Every school also has a single use bathroom for any student who feels uncomfortable with using the bathroom with any other students.

[See ODE Guidance Pg 25](#) : OSBA has not written a policy on Transgender Restrooms.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Question: What is the goal of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs?

Answer: District goal: Create a culture of care and belonging by providing staff and students time, supports and resources. Our core belief is that we want all staff and students to feel happy and proud of their work.

The rationale for using SEL in schools:

For a long time, we’ve seen students at all ages who have a hard time interacting with peers, dealing with frustrations in a reasonable way, and identifying what they need in times of stress. Since returning from the pandemic we’ve seen this challenge grow exponentially at every level.

SEL practices are a way to teach students how to positively interact with each other, how to support their peers and family members, how to identify when they are reaching a breaking point, and what they can do for themselves.

Any human cannot have the capacity to listen and learn unless they feel safe and connected (there is a lot of research behind this). SEL practices help us as staff members to create a safe and calm environment and be able to connect with students on a personal level. While our main job is to teach, that can’t be our first job. *Students don’t care what we know unless they know that we care.* SEL practices help us get there.

What this looks like in practice:

Schools across the district do short mini lessons with students throughout the year. This also aligns with our positive and proactive approach to behavior management. Both in and out of class we help students to know what the expectation is so they aren’t confused. When they don’t meet that expectation, we start first by asking the student why they didn’t comply and then work to re-teach them, rather than immediately giving a

punishment. Oftentimes the reason students aren't doing the right thing is because they don't know how to do the right thing.

Recently Dorena School had an entire morning dedicated to learning about these concepts and how to use the strategies to be better students and teachers. They learned about how their brain responds when in fear or upset, how that affects their thinking, and what they can do to get back on track. The response from students was amazing: One child left to go to the bathroom and on their way back was running quickly and said to a staff member "I have to get back to my class - I'm learning about my brain!"

Confusions:

There is a misperception that by engaging students in SEL work that they somehow will be forced to stray from the morals of their family. While every family has a different set of values and ethics, the SEL practices that we engage in with our students only help them to be better family members, better members of society, and better members of any community of which they are a part (religious or otherwise).

Parent Access to Curriculum

Question: What is the process a parent should use to review the curriculum a teacher is using.

Answer: A parent can request curriculum materials from several staff members if the curriculum has already been in use:

1. The teacher of your child who is teaching the curriculum you wish to review
2. The principal of the school where your child is enrolled
3. The Director of Teaching and Learning

Depending on the request, the staff member may provide the parent with physical textbooks or workbooks, links to websites, and/or online videos.

If we are adopting a new curriculum, the adoption team displays the curricular materials at the district office prior to making a recommendation to the school board. Parents may also inquire and schedule a time to review the materials with the Teaching and Learning office while this material is being displayed. For an example about how to schedule time to see the materials check this link: [Teaching and Learning Materials](#)

Curriculum adoption for each subject/content area occurs every 7 years and is scheduled by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). Depending on the subject/content area, this can be a very expensive purchase and process. For that reason, many Oregon school districts delay their curriculum adoption simply because they don't have the funds. SLSD has done this in the past but is currently on track to be aligned with the ODE schedule.

[IIA Instructional Material Resources](#)

ODE reviews any potential programs and provides a list of those that are approved to be adopted. If a district wants to adopt a different program they must go through an exception process.

Question: Are certain curriculum topics opt-in instead of opt-out?

Answer:

According to Oregon Law, parents can opt their children out of any or all sexuality education components. However, parents cannot opt their children out of the entire health course or program without written documentation of a religious or disability-related reason. In those cases, parents would also have to demonstrate to the school district how to comply with the Health Education Standards with alternative instruction.

Parents can also opt their students out of statewide testing requirements.

We do not have any opt-in curriculum. All of our curricula (Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Health) are aligned to age-appropriate state standards. Requiring families to opt-in to any curriculum would be an undue burden on families and an unnecessary requirement. Further, school staff believe such practices would disproportionately deny curricular access to students whose parents are not engaged with their school.

Staff and Parent Communications

Question: Does district policy encourage staff to lie to parents about students' gender pronouns?

Answer: No. Lying would be against the professional ethics of a teacher, administrator or any district employee. South Lane Teacher Standards state that a teacher must "demonstrate sound judgment reflecting integrity, honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness". As a licensed educator in the state of Oregon, teachers and administrators must "maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, exemplifying personal integrity and honesty" Violation of these standards could lead to discipline of the staff member. If a parent suspects that a staff member has lied to them, the parent should discuss it with the teacher and supervising administrator.

Question: Are there any circumstances under which staff would hide a student's trans identity from parents and if so, what?

Answer: Our staff members make every effort to work collaboratively with parents when students disclose sensitive personal information. Often this is done by counselors, social emotional learning specialists or school administrators. If a staff member withholds any information from a parent it is only when the student has indicated fear of retaliation or emotional harm from the parent. Our staff members proceed cautiously when students indicate fear of harm from a parent. If this is the case, they may involve Department of Human Services (DHS) or police depending on what the student discloses. Staff members work in partnership with counselors and administrators when this is the case.

Question: Has a staff member from Preschool Promise punched a student?

Answer: The district did receive a report that a staff member physically abused a student. Student safety is our #1 concern, so we take these concerns very seriously. As with all serious allegations of this nature we took swift and thorough action. We made sure the students in the classroom were safe while conducting a detailed investigation. This allegation was also reported to local police and to the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS involved their investigative division (OTIS - Office of Training, Investigations and Safety). In addition, the allegation was reported to and reviewed by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC - the body responsible for issuing teacher licenses). All 4 agencies came to the same conclusion that there was no evidence to support this claim.

Board Meetings

Question: Why does the Board conduct the Board meetings in a small room with limited access?

Answer: The Board has always conducted Board meetings in the Boardroom at the district office. The law now requires that all Board meetings be available to the public virtually. We've installed permanently wired speakers to allow the conversations to be heard. Due to our commitment to prioritizing dollars to the classroom, we don't have this capability in other district spaces. We do have an overflow room where community members can observe the meeting in a space where they can be in community. The reason for silence is so that the Board can engage in dialogue with one another or with staff members.

Question: Why are observers of the Board meetings not allowed to engage in conversation with the Board or one another?

Answer: By law and policy, Board meetings are meetings for the Board to conduct district business in public. They are not meetings with the public for discussion. However, Boards may choose to allow public comment for a limited part of the meeting.

See policy: [BDDH Public Comment](#)

Question: Why is the public comment time limited and why does the Board limit the topics they will allow?

Answer: The Board only has one meeting a month to accomplish all that is required to run the district. Because Board members are volunteers and the staff members present have already worked a full-day, we try to keep the meetings to a reasonable amount of time. For the Board to know about the district, the staff brings reports and presentations to share about what the district is doing for Board members to be able to make informed decisions.

In closing, the Board would like for me to convey the following message:

As school board members, we work to represent the priorities of our community while at the same time making decisions that best serve our students. On every issue that is

brought to the Board, we consider what is the highest priority and how we can best serve all of our students.

From time to time, there arises a group of community members who want to have the Board take action on an issue or they take issue with the way a decision is made or how it is being implemented. The Board determines how much time to hear comments on specific topics based on how much work needs to be accomplished at the remaining Board meetings given the considerations mentioned above.

Please contact me if you have any further questions regarding this communication.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Curtis

Early Learning Center and Community Services

Heather Murphy and Sarah Canales



EARLY LEARNING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Heather Murphy
EARLY LEARNING
ADMINISTRATOR (1FTE)

Kristen Barnett
PRESCHOOL PROMISE
ADMINISTRATOR (1FTE)

Preschool Promise Staff
LEAD TEACHER (5FTE)
EDUCATIONAL ASST. (9FTE)

Rachel Nordquist
Early Learning Office Manager
(1FTE)

Sarah Canales
Early Learning/Community
Services Supervisor (1FTE)

Lesly Canales
Family Support Specialist
(1FTE)

Bethany Abbott
Cottage Grove High School Child
Development Center Supervisor (1FTE)

Wendy Vander Sys
Family Support Specialist
(1FTE)

To Be Hired
Educational Assistant (1FTE)

To Be Hired
Educational Assistant (1FTE)

Hilda Cruz
Family Support Specialist
(1FTE)

Christina Pleitez
Community Care
Specialist (1FTE)

Courtney Rose
Community Care
Specialist (1FTE)

Glenn Trujillo
Community Care
Specialist (1FTE)

Kalli Schwehr
Community Care
Specialist (1FTE)

Gillian Dahne
Community Care
Specialist (1FTE)

Marissa Martin
Community Care
Specialist (1FTE)

The Team

Our Community Care Specialists

Christina Pleitez

Early Learning Center



Courtney Rose

Lincoln Middle School and
Al Kennedy High School



Gillian Dahne

Harrison Elementary



Glenn Trujillo

Dorena School, London
School, SOLO



Kalli Schwehr

Bohemia Elementary



Marissa Martin

Cottage Grove High School



Roles and Responsibilities

- Community Care Specialists provide direct support to families depending on their identified needs
- Connect families to community resources through referrals and/or sharing information about community based services
- Create a network of resources, in coordination with the school and social service agencies, to ensure family access to available services
- Assist families with necessary paperwork needed to receive services
- Establish connection between academic success and basic needs by working to remove barriers preventing families from accessing and/or using the available resources



Ticket System



Staff

Staff can submit a ticket for the CCS



Resources

CCS will connect students/families to resources



Rapid Access Network

CCS Team sends alert to community responders

Access to Services



Health

- Referring students and families to mental health services
- Oregon Health Plan applications



Programs

- Employment services
- Apply for food assistance



Transportation

- Ride Source
- South Lane Wheels

Early Learning and Community Services

2022/23

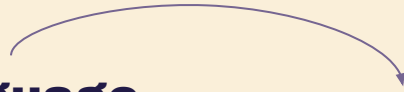
**Peggy's
Primary
Connection**



**Language
Support**



Little Lions



Early Learning and Community Services

**Working
Together**



Access

Support





My Neighborhood Map

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Parent-Child Play

Tiempo De Jugar	10:45...
Manualidades	11:15...
Tiempo De Leer	11:45...
Tiempo De Limpiar	12:15...

Craft Music

Clean Up

Listen Carefully to Others

Day to Day

Exit Card



Questions



Date: May 1, 2023
To: School Board
From: Finance Director, Celia Gowing
Subject: Payroll Update

Update on April Payroll:

We processed pay for 568 staff for our April regular pay check run.

Corrections - We had corrections for missing hours (3 staff) and coaching stipends for 7 staff. All checks have been issued.

As part of our agreement with the classified union, a google document was created for classified staff to report concerns and/or questions about their pay check. This document is shared with the Union leaders. In response to the April payroll, there have been 0 entries on this sheet.

American Fidelity 403b - Last month, I reported that we have been able to contact our account representative, account specialist and a supervisor about questions and possible errors on staff accounts. American Fidelity 403b accounts have been fully reconciled and we have made corrections as necessary.

Potential lost earnings on 403B accounts - I have the information I need in order to begin most of the calculations. We have started calculations and sending payments as calculations are completed.

Process Steps/Relationship Building:

Payroll Group Email – We continue to have questions regarding contributions and deductions in general. This month, most of our questions about reading pay check stubs.

For March, we had approximately 22 emails. Most emails have a response within 3 business days.

New Items:

HRA-Veba accounts

For staff who opt out of insurance, the District makes contributions to an HRA-VEBA account. (Health Reimbursement Arrangement - Voluntary employees' beneficiary association)

HRA-VEBA has two categories for depositing contributions. One is a standard plan and one is a post separation plan. The standard plan allows for claims at any time. The post separation plan requires staff to separate from service or retire before they can make claims. Historically, we have deposited contributions into the post separation plan unless the staff member was covered by another OEBA plan. These were the rules established by OEBA.

Recently, a staff member was able to successfully have OEBA reverse this rule. This means that staff who are covered by other insurance may be able to have funds moved to a standard plan. We (HR and payroll) will need to make sure that we are following IRS rules about HRA-VEBA contributions before we revise our policy and procedures. If a staff member, a spouse, or dependent are making or receiving contributions to a health savings account (HSA), the IRS has rules about accessing funds.

After understanding the IRS rules and confirming with OEBA their requirements, we will establish a policy and procedure for how staff are placed on either plan 1 or 2. We will also establish a procedure for staff to be moved from one plan to another as they qualify.