



YAMHILL CARLTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

120 N. Larch Place - Yamhill, OR 97148 | PH: 503-852-6980 - FX: 503-662-4931 | www.ycsd.k12.or.us

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD RETREAT AGENDA

LOCATION: YCSD BOARDROOM, 120 N LARCH PL, YAMHILL OR 97148

Monday, July 29, 2024

Board Retreat: 3:30pm

Board Members Present: Susan FitzGerald, Jami Egland, Erin Galyean, Ken Watson, JaJetta Dumdi

DO Staff/ Present: Clint Raever, Mary Brown, Tami Zigler

Also Present: Chloe Dreher, Kyle Laier, Carol Fenstermacher

MINUTES

I. Call to Order Special Session

Susan FitzGerald called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

II. Flag Salute

III. New Business

A. Communication Plan Presentation

-C.Raever introduced Chloe Dreher, Kyle Laier, and Carol Fenstermacher. In order to improve communication efforts, the district has contracted with WESD and Assist Education. K.Laier used to be a superintendent and has been able to be a mentor to C.Raever as well. C.Raever asked them to present to the board their communication plan for the district.

-K.Laier stated that one of the biggest challenges for districts is communication. Assist Education has an excellent relationship with the WESD. They are very strategic about what needs to be communicated to the community. Everyone who works in the firm has been a public educator in the past. This means, they are looking at it through all the lenses they know they need to look at.

-The board introduced themselves. J.Dumdi has served on the board for three years. K.Watson has served on the board for seven years. S.FitzGerald has served on the board for nine years and this year is her fourth year as board chair. J.Egland has served on the board since 2009. E.Galyean has served on the board for five years.

-K.Laier stated that a big piece of what is communicated comes from the board. Knowing that the district has a board with experience and knowledge will be very helpful. It is so important for the board to be listening to the community and looking at the drafts of communication documents to insure they are hitting the mark. C.Raever stated they are a great board to work with and he appreciates their open communication with him.

-C.Dreher stated she partnered with J.Warner and M.Brown to launch the new website. The website is the number one tool for the community. S.FitzGerald asked about how the access is on smart phones. C.Dreher responded it is much more mobile friendly than the old site. She asked that the board look at the website and provide any feedback they might have. S.FitzGerald asked if it was announced that the new website was up and running.

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C.Dreher replied that they did, but only on Parent Square. They wanted it to be a soft launch so they could find any issues and fix them before making a big announcement.

-Once staff starts coming back, they will be educated on how to use Parent Square the best possible way.

-C.Dreher stated that another communication tool they will be developing is a quarterly community newsletter. The district registered for a non-profit mailing ID which will substantially reduce the cost of mailings. All households, not businesses, will receive the newsletter. It will be meant to be a 'good news' campaign. K.Laier stated doing this is extremely important. Without this, for those who are outside of the school community, it leaves a void in the information they are receiving. They are very strategic on how often to send it out and what topics are that they are communicating to the community. By doing these newsletters, community members aren't filling in the blanks with what is happening and helps them feel somewhat knowledgeable about what is going on. S.FitzGerald asked how many pages it will be. C.Dreher responded it will be a legal sized paper, folded in half which will make four pages. She will be working with J.Warner and M.Brown to build the content. They are open to the board giving input as well. K.Laier stated that they will create it and tailor it to what is meaningful to the district and the community. They will look at the district's values and vision, and find stories that connect to those. They will also look at what community members who aren't connected to students want to hear about.

-J.Dumdi asked when the first newsletter will be sent out. C.Dreher replied they are aiming for mid-August. K.Watson commented that the two principals should be key contributors. E.Galyean stated that the high school has a strong leadership team and should be involved as well. L. Fenstermacher agreed it is important to hear from students.

-L.Fenstermacher noted that the district is above the norm in social media. It is excellent that things are posted often and that there is a variety of posts. K.Laier stated they will take the stories from the newsletter and post it on the social media also. Things like the trap team being number one at Nationals and FFA showing at the fair.

-C.Dreher stated that social media ads are also another way to push things out. They are cost effective.

-C.Dreher presented a PowerPoint presentation explaining the communications support that they are provided to the district. This includes a weekly check in with C.Raeveer, monthly social media updates and email communications, and a community information mailer. Some projects in progress include a new user-friendly district website and to gain wide community involvement. Upcoming projects include surveys to the community to determine attitudes and priorities regarding long range facility planning and communications materials being created and shared.

-K.Laier stated that the purpose of the surveys is to be able to understand how the community feels. They have the ability to draft and create these surveys. QR codes have become a norm and it is a good way to survey the community.

-K.Watson asked if the letter that was sent out regarding the restructuring of the administration was run through the communication team (WESD and Assist Education). C.Raeveer stated that he called and spoke to K.Laier about it, but didn't have them review the document before it was sent out. K.Watson stated it was a little plain and figureless. K.Laier stated they are there for things like this one that come up unexpectedly. K.Laier knows that the work of small school districts is challenging.

-K.Laier stated that one thing that would be helpful to do is a year-end review of what took place last year and the good things to look forward to in the new year. C.Fenstermacher mentioned that those could be topics that could go out via social media or even in the

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newsletter. C.Raeveer stated that when he meets with the principals next week, he will talk to them about this.

-J.dumdi suggested that the amount of scholarships that YC students earned could be shared and the learning journey for J and M term. E.Galyean suggested to highlight the learning advances that occurred because of J and M term. She stated facilities upgrades to improve the safety should be shared. K.Laier agreed that information about facilities needs to be shared and the district needs to gather information to find what the community's perception of them is. Facilities is an area that a lot of districts don't think about sharing information about, but it is very important to do so. By doing this, the community has a true understanding about where the facilities are, both good and bad. -C.Fenstermacher

stated that the number one thing that people don't understand about schools is the finances. The district needs to communicate to them that they are being fiscally responsible. J.Dumdi suggested something with simple graphs to explain how school funding works.

-K.Watson stated some influential community members do not like J and M term and will be bringing their concerns to the board. C.Raeveer stated that there have been mixed reviews from both parents and students. He stated that the program needs to be done for at least two years to get enough data from it. C.Fenstermacher stated there may be some misperceptions and the district should be sure to communicate about it and get feedback from the school community. These are the types of things that WESD and Assist Education are here to assist with. K.Laier stated the more trust you have with your community the better it will go. Once you lose the communities trust, it is very hard to rebuild it.

-E.Galyean asked if they will help with an engagement plan of inviting the community in. K.Laier that will happen a little later once the communication has improved.

-S.FitzGerald asked how are they going to measure the effectiveness of this communication plan. C.Dreher stated that website data can be tracked. Things like how often it is visited and what areas are looked at the most. QR codes are can also provide a lot of data.

-E.Galyean asked how they measure the community feel. K.Laier stated that as more communication gets put out, there will be various data collection points they can use. Things like survey results and public input at board meetings.

-C.Raeveer asked what their projection is for the future. K.Laier responded that the first step is to communicate out about all aspects of the school and start to build trust. When it gets to the point where the district needs to go out for a bond, all the work already done will help substantially. The next piece of this will be a long-range facilities assessment, which has already been done. This will look at what needs to be done, what will need to be done in the future, and what things they would like to do. After all of this work has been done, polling will need to take place. Once an increase in support starts to show, then they will do an initial poll. The polling results will direct them to what the next step should be. After the assessment, communication, and polling has been done, a bond package would be presented.

-C.Raeveer mentioned that the turf project would be good item to communicate out to the community. That news will be shared with the update on the stadium. They found a non-profit that will cover 70% of the cost. There will be more meetings held about this project. The water bill for the month was around \$18,000, so having turf will reduce that substantially.

-C.Raeveer stated the long-range plan needs to be looked at again, because some things have changed since then (i.e. stadium, vestibules, HVAC, etc). The space at the elementary school is another area that needs to be looked at and whether moving 4th grade back to the elementary is important to the community.

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-S.FitzGerald asked how the district communicate to the community that they have a fiduciary responsibility to support the district and have them understand that they are a huge part of supporting the district. K.Laier responded that one piece of this is that a lot of residents don't understand how the district is funded. There has to be some education around that and engage people, so that they know they have a voice or say and some level of investment (even it is just speaking their mind).

-C. Fenstermacher stated part of this communication plan is helping folks understand that the schools are the heart of the community and that they are a community, not just some entity. This starts from the inside, making sure staff understands what is going on and educating staff on what is happening, and then moving out to the community.

-The board agrees that this plan sounds wonderful and appreciates them for all they are doing for the district.

B. Strategic Plan Monitoring Tool

-K.Laier stated they want to bring the district's strategic plan to life. He found a dashboard that the WESD has that would be a good tool to support the strategic plan. The plan should have somewhere that people can go to see how it is doing and should be easily accessible. They will support the district with this and tailor it to their strategic plan. Assist Education will work with WESD to create a model for this. They will be able to look at the indicators they feel are important. Having Assist Education and the WESD involved in the project provides efficiency and synergy since they are working on communication as well.

-K.Laier stated when looking at the plan, they need to think outside the box. The problem with most of the metrics throughout the state are that they are too simple. The metrics should resonate with the community.

-S.FitzGerald asked who will decide what the metrics will be. K.Laier responded that he will work with Clint on this. There is some work that needs to be done before it is brought to the board. The goal is to go live with this in the spring or summer of next year.

-S.FitzGerald stated it is a living document and can be adjusted when or if needed.

-K.Watson stated that they are doing things with the strategic plan, but there is not a strong sense amongst the community of climate/culture. He hopes this engagement with WESD and Assist Education will help to spread this.

-C.Dreher stated that they make short videos, that are two minutes or less, to help educate people. Topics could be anything from explaining how graduation rates are determined to how schools are funded. C.Fenstermacher commented that they could even do one for J/M term.

C. Reporting Topics and Strategic Plan/School Improvement Plan from Principals

-C.Raeveer stated the board wanted to discuss what they want the principals to report on during board meetings.

-S.FitzGerald would like to see what their strategic plans are for their buildings. E.Galyean stated she feels the reports are reactive. It would be nice to see what their strategy is going to be, so they can report on their progress.

-C.Raeveer stated that at the admin retreat they will start with mission and vision and then break down the values and focus on what they are doing in the buildings. After that they will be able to develop a plan, which would be their school improvement plan.

-S.FitzGerald stated the vision and mission should drive them in their decision making progress. At the board meeting, she would like to be informed on how they are meeting their goals in relation to the vision, mission, and values.

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D. Finalize Superintendent Goals

-C.Raever stated that the board asked him to put timelines on his goals. He worked with Assist and WESD to get come more specific dates. He has marked each item as 'in-progress', 'not-started', or 'complete'. He also added a section for artifacts as well. He went through each target and reported on what stage of completion each of them is in.

-Some things that he is working on in regards to his goals are as follows:

- Start involving leadership students at city council meeting and work with the City of Carlton to meet regularly.*
- Work with WESD to develop a crisis communication plan including establishing a chain of command and key communicators.*
- An ongoing project is integrating the mission, vision, and strategic goals into daily practices, policies, and decision-making processes at all levels of organization. Not everyone is aware of those and he is working to communicate with those who aren't aware of them.*

-Communicating achievements has not been started. K.Watson stated that the quarterly newsletter can be used for this.

-In the area of professional development, they are looking at ENVOY for student engagement. Having students engaged and a good school culture reduces bullying.

-They have mapped out the administrative team meeting topics for the year.

-K.Watson asked if C.Raever has had conversations with the administrators and asked them how he can help. C.Raever responded that during the goal setting meetings he has with each of them, he will ask what they need in regards to support and training. He also had administrators take a survey to find what areas they want to focus on as a group and gave them a place to write individual needs.

-C.Raever stated that he does need to do a better job about evaluating if the admin PD has been effective.

-Regarding evaluation and feedback, S.FitzGerald asked how he is doing this. C.Raever responded that he used subjective and observational data. He would like to make a standardized form for the walkthroughs, but it is difficult since each school is looking for different things. S.FitzGerald asked what it is they look for during walkthroughs. C.Raever responded that it can vary depending on the day. When they debrief after the walkthroughs, A.Dallas and T.Smith take the forms that were filled out and use them as artifacts to talk to the teachers about any issues or observations.

-This year, C.Raever will have regular monthly meetings with each principal. This is something new that he has not done in the past.

E. Set Board Goals

-E.Galyean would like to have the board complete a self-evaluation, since it has been a few years since they have done one. She feels a reflection process is helpful to know what goals to set.

-E.Galyean showed the board members the standards that are used for the self-evaluation process and feels it would be very helpful. They don't have to do it this year and move forward with setting the board goals, but she would like to do it before next year. This could be done in work session.

-E.Galyean stated the current goals support the strategic plan, but are missing how that is being accomplished.

-The board agreed to take a look at the self-evaluation information individually and give more thought to the goals before setting them.

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F. Superintendent Communication Agreement

-C.Raever shared his communication agreement:

- Crisis Situations: The superintendent will call the board chair first, followed by a call to the rest of the board members either by himself or by the board chair in his stead. If the superintendent is unable to make the call to the board chair, he will delegate the task to a staff member and the board chair will then call the rest of the board members. If warranted, the superintendent will send a follow up email the entire board.*
- Newsworthy Situations: The superintendent will send an email to the entire board. If the situation is rapidly changing he will call the board chair, and together they will determine if the situation warrants calling the rest of the board or sending an email to everyone.*
- Drop in visits: Board members can drop in to visit the superintendent anytime at the district office, but should check with the superintendent or his assistant to ensure that he will be in the office.*

G. Discuss Ending Fund Balance

-J.Egland suggested that the district develop a policy regarding the ending fund balance.

T.Zigler agreed that that would be a good idea. S.FitzGerald asked what the advantage is to having a policy. T.Zigler responded that is give the district a better rating on bonds.

C.Raever gave examples of what other districts use. The standard used to be 5%, but inflation and other factors are driving that up. T.Zigler stated that in no way, did she not want to spend the money, but part of it is making sure the district can sustain what they have as well. She is doing a new budget structure this year. It is zero based budgeting. It looks at what programs are working and what programs are being used. It will take two to three years to get the feedback and really know what the benchmarks are.

The ending balance this year was 28%. Some of that is due to still having savings from the ESSER funds that a lot of districts don't. E.Galyean stated that having a high ending fund balance can open the district up to scrutiny.

C. Raever will work with T.Zigler to draw up a policy. They will use a percentage and will have to decide what that percentage will be. K.Watson stated that there are things that happen throughout the school year that the district doesn't have control over that affects what is going to be left at the end of the year. T.Zigler clarified that the policy wouldn't have a cap, it would only have minimum.

-S.FitzGerald asked if there was any other business they wished to discuss.

-C.Raever gave an update on the stadium. S.FitzGerald asked if there will be handrails on the stadium. C.Raever said the booster club will not be doing that, but the high school shop should be able to make them.

-The district needs to get three bids on the painting for the stadium.

-The gutters are being donated by DeMoss and Gutterman.

J.Dumdi asked if it will be ready by football season. C.Raever stated he is not sure if it will be completely done by the beginning of the season, but should be fairly soon after the first game of the season.

IV. Adjournment

S.FitzGerald adjourned the meeting at 7:26pm.

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