Jefferson County School District 509J
UNITE. ENGAGE. SOAR.

2025-2026 BOARD MEETING @6:30PM
Jefferson County School District 509-J
Monday, February 9, 2026

Hybrid: In-person and Electronic via Zoom available for both meetings

ACCESS ZOOM MEETING HERE

Phone: 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
Meeting ID: 898 8797 8218 Passcode: 454556

MEETING LOCATION:
Jefferson County School District 509J
445 SE Buff Street, Madras, OR 97741

2025-2026 Board of Directors:
Chair Jacob Struck, Vice Chair Regina Mitchell, Kevin Richards, Laurie Danzuka and Courtney Snead

REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ATTENDANCE: Chair Jacob Struck, Vice Chair Regina Mitchell *(attended remotely until 7:29pm)*, Laurie Danzuka and Kevin Richards

ABSENT: Courtney Snead and Vice Chair Regina Mitchell *(attended remotely until 7:29pm)*

1. **CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / BOARD MEMBER ROLL CALL**
   Board Chair Jacob Struck called the meeting to order at 6:33pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Board Secretary noted board member attendance for the record.

2. **AGENDA ADOPTION**
   Board Chair Jacob Struck noted one correction to the agenda, the Student Representative Report would not be presented, and he called for a motion.

   Laurie Danzuka made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended; a vote was taken and passed unanimously **– APPROVED 4/0.**

Board Member:	Jacob Struck	Regina Mitchell	Laurie Danzuka	Kevin Richards	Courtney Snead
Vote:	Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent

3. **INFORMATION / PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS / COMMUNICATION / DISCUSSION ITEMS**
   ~~3.1. JCSD 509J Student Representative (Chloe Carillo) Report~~
   Board Chair Jacob Struck proceeded to the next agenda item.

   3.2. **New Website**
   Superintendent Jay Mathisen introduced Director of Communications Joseph (Joey) Prechtl to present the newly launched district website.

Joseph (Joey) Prechtl reported that the website officially launched on December 29, 2025, strategically timed during winter break to minimize user disruption and allow time to address technical issues prior to students returning in January.
He explained that the redesign was driven by several priorities:

- Improved user experience and mobile responsiveness
- ADA Title II and WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility compliance
- Consistency across district and school pages
- Enhanced navigation for families, staff, and students

The new content management system includes:

- Real-time accessibility compliance checks
- Screen reader and keyboard compatibility
- Ongoing automated compliance updates

The website also integrates Weglot translation software, providing translation in over 100 languages with the ability for manual editing to ensure accuracy. Joey reviewed key features of the homepage and school pages, highlighting consistent navigation, quick-access buttons, district showcases, news, and event listings.

Chair Struck inquired about analytics tracking. Joey explained that Google Analytics will be integrated to better track page visits.

Superintendent Mathisen commended Joey for the extensive work required to complete the transition, noting the significant effort undertaken by a one-person communications department.

3.3. **3rd Grade ELA: Beating Poverty as a Predictor**

Superintendent Mathisen presented findings from a November 2025 research study analyzing 2023–2024 third-grade ELA state test scores nationwide. The study examined the relationship between poverty levels and third-grade literacy performance. Schools were plotted based on poverty levels and expected proficiency rates. Schools exceeding predicted performance by 20 percentage points or more were highlighted.
Superintendent Mathisen further explained:

- Only 33 elementary schools in Oregon met the 20-point threshold.
- Buff Elementary School exceeded its poverty-based prediction by approximately 22 percentage points in spring 2024.
- In Central Oregon, only four schools met that benchmark.

Superintendent Mathisen emphasized that such performance reflects sustained instructional effort rather than chance and he asked former Principal of Buff Elementary, Billie White (now the current Curriculum Director) to share her perspective.

Billie White addressed the Board and reflected on the school's improvement journey since 2015, when Buff was designated a school improvement school (bottom 10% statewide).
She explained that key instructional shifts included:

- Commitment to teaching grade-level standards to all students
- Eliminating leveled instruction models that limited exposure to grade-level content
- Strong teacher collaboration and accountability
- Focused implementation of priority standards and aligned curriculum

Billie White further explained that the most significant shift was a change in mindset — establishing the belief that every child can achieve grade-level literacy. Concluding that staff continues to review assessment data during their regular meeting to analyze progress and adjust instruction.

Superintendent Jay Mathisen reported that preliminary review of more recent data suggests three of the district's four elementary schools may meet similar performance benchmarks if the study is repeated, with the fourth performing close to the threshold. All four schools are performing above the expected trend line.

Board members recognized the courage to change instructional practices and expressed appreciation for staff, students, and families.

It was also reported that district leadership reported a graduation rate of approximately 92%, the highest in district history.

The Board acknowledged this milestone as the result of sustained K–12 efforts and also expressed appreciation for continued strength in Career & Technical Education (CTE) programming and community partnerships taking place in the district.

3.4. **Enrollment Report**

Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to page 41 and explained the enrollment report. He said that district leadership reviewed enrollment trends showing continued declines consistent with state and national patterns.
Key points he included:

- Long-term strategic financial planning
- Minimizing classroom impact
- Avoiding layoffs when possible through attrition
- Maintaining healthy financial reserves

He further explained, while overall enrollment is declining, student retention within the district has improved. Leadership also noted declining regional birth rates, indicating continued enrollment challenges ahead.

Board members expressed appreciation for transparency and proactive fiscal management.

3.4.1. Trends

CFO Brad Henry addressed the Board and stated that his remarks would be brief and focused on outlining our district priorities in light of enrollment-driven budget impacts.

CFO Brad Henry explained, based on the confirmed enrollment data previously presented by the 509J superintendent, the district anticipates a budget impact that will reduce the number of positions it is able to hire for the upcoming school year; declining enrollment will necessitate a reduction in staffing positions. Specific positions to be reduced are not being shared at this time, as additional internal communication and discussion must occur before presenting that information publicly.

CFO Brad Henry emphasized several guiding goals and values informing this process:

- Recognition of Ongoing Reductions
  This is not an isolated year of reductions. Previous financial reports indicated this would likely be the second year of a three-year reduction cycle. However, the most recent enrollment data suggests the reduction period may extend beyond three years. The district should anticipate continued cost-cutting measures moving forward.
- Minimizing Impact on Classroom Experience
  The district's priority is to protect the student classroom experience as much as possible. While it is impossible to eliminate all impact, efforts will focus on minimizing direct effects on students and classrooms.
- Minimizing or Avoiding Layoffs (Reduction in Force – RIFs)
  The district aims to reduce positions primarily through attrition (e.g., retirements and resignations) rather than layoffs. While there remains a possibility of a small number of layoffs, there is also a possibility that none will be required. Final determinations are still pending at the school level.
- Maintaining Strong Reserve Funding
  Maintaining a solid reserve balance remains a priority. The current year's budget includes the use of reserves, and a forthcoming revised budget will also require reserve spending. However, this approach is not sustainable long term, and preserving reserve funds is critical.

3.5. **Budget Update**

3.5.1. Priorities

3.5.2. Process

Superintendent Jay Mathisen outlined the communication process supporting the reductions previously shared by CFO Brad Henry:

- The preliminary position reduction list was shared with the district's SST (Supervisors and Support Team), consisting of 11 district administrators. Feedback was gathered and revisions were made.
- Building-level impacts were shared with principals by their respective supervisory leaders. Principals were informed of the reduction targets based on projected enrollment and are developing building-level plans. These plans are due to district leadership by the end of the week.
- On the 19th of the month, all district and building administrators will meet to review the district-wide reduction plan to ensure alignment and coordinated communication.
- By early March, affected staff members will have individual conversations with their supervisors. These conversations may involve reassignment to a different position for the following year or, potentially, notification of a layoff. The district continues to work toward minimizing or eliminating layoffs.
- A Budget 101 workshop and budget work session will be held in April as part of the formal budget development process.

Superintendent Jay Mathisen concluded by inviting questions from the Board.

Board members expressed appreciation for transparency and proactive fiscal management.

Board Chair Jacob Struck proceeded to the next agenda item.

3.6. **JCSD 509J Golf Co-Op**

3.6.1. Boys Team

3.6.2. Girls Team

Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to page 42 of the board packet and explained that MHS Athletic Director Walter Stahl presented a request regarding a golf cooperative with Culver School District. This would be the third consecutive year that the districts have partnered for boys' and girls' golf.

As required by OSAA regulations, the cooperative agreement must be brought to each school board annually for approval; multi-year approvals are not permitted. For the current year, the cooperative would include one boy golfer and one girl golfer from Culver joining Jefferson County School District's boys' and girls' golf teams.

Superintendent Jay Mathisen highlighted that this partnership provides student-athletes the opportunity to participate on a competitive golf team. The board was advised that action to approve the cooperative for boys' and girls' golf would be taken later in the meeting.

3.7. **Proposed 2026-2027 JCSD 509J School Calendar**

Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board member to page 43 of the board packet, to present the proposed 2026-2027 JCSD 509J School Calendar. He explained, the calendar was developed through a collaborative process involving the committee and a representative from each school, led by Jayel Hayden, HR Director. The recommended draft closely mirrors the current 2025–2026 calendar, with no major changes expected to impact students, families, or staff. Board approval is required for the 2026–2027 calendar, and members will have the opportunity to take action later in the meeting.

A draft calendar for the 2027–2028 school year will be presented to the board next month (March) for informational purposes only. This calendar will be posted on the district website alongside the 2026–2027 calendar to provide families with advance notice.

There was a brief discussion regarding the total number of school and contractual days. It was confirmed that the number of contractual days for certified staff and regular student days will remain unchanged. Clarification was provided regarding counting methods, confirming alignment with current standards.

4. HEARING OF CITIZENS / DELEGATIONS / PUBLIC COMMENT [2-OPTIONS]

OPTION 1: Each person wishing to speak will have signed in at the beginning of the meeting to be recognized. The 509-J Board of Directors reserves this time for citizens to share comments or concerns. Because time is limited, as a standard practice, as a courtesy to others, and to maintain our meeting schedule, guests will be allotted three minutes to speak. If you have a group attending regarding the same topic, you will need to appoint one speaker. The Chair has authority to keep order and impose any reasonable restrictions necessary to conduct an efficient meeting. The Board reserves the right to delay discussion on any item presented until later in the meeting or at a subsequent

meeting. Objective criticism of operations and programs may be heard, but no complaints concerning specific personnel, the visitor will be directed to the appropriate means for filing complaints as necessary.

OPTION 2: Jefferson County School District 509-J will accept public comment in writing prior to the meeting. Written comments must be received online (via the comment link on the agenda) by 1:00 pm [the date of the board meeting] and may be read during the public comment section of the meeting. Comments or complaints regarding specific people or personnel WILL NOT be accepted, please refer to the district complaint policy.

There were no comments submitted and no one signed up to present comments to the board this evening.

[Note: Regina Mitchell left the meeting at 7:29pm]

5. ACTION ITEMS

5.1. CONSENT AGENDA

5.1.1. Approval of Regular Session Board Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2026
5.1.2. Personnel Action
5.1.3. Resolution #26-07, Misc. Grants & Donations ($8,000)
5.1.4. Financial Report

Board Chair Struck called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda as presented.

Laurie Danzuka made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented; a vote was taken and approved unanimously **– APPROVED 3/0** *[one board member left prior to the action items, resulting in two absent].*

Board Member:	Jacob Struck	Regina Mitchell	Laurie Danzuka	Kevin Richards	Courtney Snead
Vote:	Y	Absent	Y	Y	Absent

5.2. JCSD 509J GOLF CO-OP

5.2.1. Boys Team
5.2.2. Girls Team

Kevin Richards made a motion to approve the JCSD 509J Golf Cooperative for the boys' and girls' teams, as presented; a vote was taken and approved unanimously **– APPROVED 3/0** *[one board member left prior to the action items, resulting in two absent].*

Board Member:	Jacob Struck	Regina Mitchell	Laurie Danzuka	Kevin Richards	Courtney Snead
Vote:	Y	Absent	Y	Y	Absent

5.3. PROPOSED 2026-2027 JCSD 509J SCHOOL CALENDAR

Laurie Danzuka made a motion to approve 2026-2027 JCSD 509J School Calendar as presented; a vote was taken and approved unanimously **– APPROVED 3/0** *[one board member left prior to the action items, resulting in two absent].*

Board Member:	Jacob Struck	Regina Mitchell	Laurie Danzuka	Kevin Richards	Courtney Snead
Vote:	Y	Absent	Y	Y	Absent

6. BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Shay Mikalson expressed pride in the district's work and the collective effort of staff impacting students from kindergarten through senior year. He reported the district's graduation rate reached 91.7–92%, the highest in district history, an increase of approximately 7% over the last four cohort years. Recognized and celebrated students, families, and staff for their contributions to student success.
- Jay Mathisen thanked CFO Brad Henry for his leadership and financial planning, noting the district has remained stable despite declining enrollment, in contrast to other districts facing mid-year staffing reductions. He also offered sympathies to the community affected by a recent tragic event involving a local superintendent, encouraging the board and staff to reach out and support those impacted.
- Board Members (Laurie Danzuka, Kevin Richards and Jacob Struck) combined comments – They appreciate the district's efforts in career and technical education (CTE) and partnerships with local industries to prepare students for post-school careers. They acknowledged proactive planning for future enrollment and budget challenges, and expressed gratitude for leadership and team collaboration. They also celebrate in the student achievements, including the third-grade ELA accomplishments, and emphasized the importance of ongoing student and staff recognition.
- Assistant Superintendent Shay Mikalson added that Brooke Rich, working in partnership with the district, was recently named Association for Career and Technical Educators (ACTE) Teacher of the Year, and also thanked Jacob Struck for his contributions to the CTE programs in our schools.

7. REMINDERS MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Board Leadership – **Monday, March 3, 2026 @8am** (Jacob & Courtney)
- Next JCSD 509J 2025-2026 Board Meeting – **Monday, March 9, 2026, REMINDER: at WSK8**

***Important Note**: Dates, times and locations of the events listed are subject to change with little or no notice, please check the JCSD 509J website for school board, individual school and performing arts center information on the various events scheduled throughout our district: https://www.jcsd.k12.or.us/*

8. MEETING CLOSURE/ADJOURNED

With no further business, Board Chair Jacob Struck adjourned the meeting at **7:55pm**.

Draft to Board for approval at next meeting,

Monday, March 9, 2026

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Tessa Bailey, Executive Assistant

_____ _____

Board Chair Jacob Struck Superintendent Jay Mathisen

_____ _____

Date Date