Est. 1883

BEND LAPINE Schools

EDUCATING THRIVING STUDENTS

March 17, 2026

Dear Members of the Budget Committee, Bend-La Pine Schools Staff, Students, Families, and Community Members:

As we enter the 2026-27 budget development process, Bend-La Pine Schools does so in a period of increasingly tight fiscal conditions. Slower state revenue growth, increasing fixed costs, growing state mandates, and continued uncertainty in the Oregon state budget require us to be especially disciplined, transparent, and strategic in how we allocate public resources. These realities demand careful choices, but they do not diminish our commitment to ensuring that every student in Bend-La Pine Schools thrives in our classrooms and graduates prepared for college, career, and life.

Stewardship of taxpayer dollars remains a core responsibility of our district. Whether investing in staffing, instructional materials, student supports, or the maintenance and updating of our facilities, we approach budget decisions with intentionality, stakeholder engagement through our budget committee process, and a clear focus on impact. In a constrained fiscal environment, it is more important than ever that our investments are aligned to what matters most for students and produce measurable improvements in learning outcomes.

Our budget continues to be guided by the belief that each Bend-La Pine Schools student is known by name, strength, and need, and that students, staff, and families experience schools where they can thrive. The district's organizational goals remain our true north

- Students develop a strong academic foundation;
- Students have a passion, purpose, and plan for their future;
- Students, families, and staff experience wellness, inclusion and belonging; and
- Operational systems align to support an academically effective and financially sustainable organization.

Within these priorities, we are continuing to refine and strengthen core instructional and operational systems that directly influence student success. This includes ongoing work to align our instruction and improve grading practices, so they more accurately reflect student learning; deepening the implementation of research-based reading instruction; expanding equitable access to career and technical education pathways; and ensuring that systems across the district establish common expectations across each of our schools. Even in a tighter budget climate, these efforts remain central to improving outcomes for students.

We are continuing the work of the district Culture and Climate Task Force for another year, with an intentional focus on refinement, coherence, and support. Building on the foundation established in prior years, this phase of the work emphasizes ensuring that all staff clearly understand the purpose, expectations, and practical application of agreed-upon Tier I practices, and that they feel adequately supported in delivering this work in their classrooms and schools. Through collaboration among educators, support staff, and administrators, we are strengthening consistency,

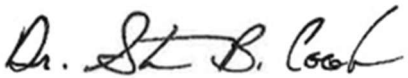
transparency, and shared ownership of classroom practices that promote positive learning environments, student dignity, and a strong sense of belonging.

As part of Oregon's integrated planning process, we continue to evaluate how best to allocate Student Investment Account Funds to support all of our students and ensure they are prepared for their future. This work is informed by a wide range of stakeholder feedback, including staff advisory groups, the Student Voice Council, the district Equity Coalition, family and community partners, and school-based input. These perspectives help guide decisions about where targeted investments can have the greatest impact while ensuring that these limited resources are used strategically, equitably, and in alignment with our organizational goals.

Finally, I confirm that this proposed budget adheres to the requirements outlined in *Bend La Pine Schools' Executive Limitation 4.3: Financial Planning and Administration*, including maintaining an ending fund balance of at least 5% of General Fund resources.

We are grateful for the continued partnership and support of our community as we navigate these fiscal challenges together, always keeping student success at the center of our work.

In collaborative partnership,



Dr. Steven Cook
Superintendent, Bend-La Pine Schools