

BOARD RETREAT MINUTES

A Board Retreat of the Springfield School District No.19 Board of Education was held on August 5, 2026.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Board Chair Jonathan Light called the Springfield Board of Education Board Retreat at 9:05 a.m.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Light led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Land Acknowledgement

Director Brew shared the following Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that we are in the traditional homeland of the Kalapuya people, specifically the community that was known as Chifin, the area that we now call Springfield.

Kalapuya people, who have lived in this region since "[Time Immemorial](#)", were illegally dispossessed of their land and forcibly removed to what are now the Grand Ronde and Siletz reservations over several years, but most notably in treaties between 1851 and 1855.

The Kalapuya are now members of the [Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde](#) and the [Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians](#), and members of the Kalapuya still live, work, study, and thrive in this area, and continue to make important contributions here in Springfield, across the land we now refer to as Oregon, and around the globe.

This information is shared out of a responsibility to honor the heritage and the humanity of all people and to promote unity within our school district.

Attendance

Board Members in attendance included Board Chair Jonathan Light, Board Vice Chair Amber Langworthy, Director Ken Kohl, Director Bob Brew, and Director Matthew Brandt.

District staff and community members identified included Interim Superintendent Shawn Stover, Brian Megert, Brett Yancey, Dustin Reese, Martie Steigleder, Jeff Fuller, Whitney McKinley, Melissa Stalder, Taylor Madden, Nicole Nakayama, Brian Richardson, Jeff Michna, Mindy LeRoux, and Dr.Tenneal Wetherell.

2. BOARD TRAINING

Interim Superintendent Shawn Stover outlined the retreat agenda, administrative activities, and proposed updated board agreements. Stover highlighted improvements in school attendance, graduation rates, and academic outcomes, emphasizing the importance of unity and shared values, including the goal to foster a collaborative environment to avoid high-conflict situations, which hinder communication. Participants were encouraged to focus on commonalities and ways of operating.

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Brian Megert led a grounding “Get to Know You” activity, asking participants to reflect on their arrival, recharging activities, and definitions of success for teachers and students. The session aimed to build team cohesion and set the stage for productive discussions and future collaboration. Team members reflected on recent challenges, shared their impacts and feelings, hobbies, and activities they use to recharge.

Key Points:

- Engagement, Joy, and Connection
- Empathetic Teachers and Joyful Students
- Recharging Through Activities

Superintendent of Lane Education Service District and Retreat Facilitator Dr. Tenneal Wetherell provided an outline of the meeting’s focus.

Building the Foundation

- Establish Common Ground
- Acknowledge the Moment and Commit to Moving Forward
- Clarify Governance Roles
- How We Will Work Today

Operating Norms

- Be Present, Listen to Understand
- Speak Candidly and Respectfully
- Assume Positive Intent
- Focus on the Future, while Acknowledging Past Challenges
- Share the Air
- Stay at the Governance Level to Ensure Effective Decision-Making
- Honor the Work We Do Together

Participants discussed the importance of future-focused discussions and assuming positive intent. A 30-day parking lot concept for prioritizing immediate action items and a longer-term parking lot concept for future considerations was used to ensure that the administrative team has clear direction. The board discussed the establishment of the superintendent operating agreement, the need for a board attorney, and other system improvements to support the new superintendent.

Improving school visit protocols, student outcomes, and community engagement was discussed. Specific issues such as enrollment growth, financial planning, and AI’s impact on education were also addressed. The need for proactive policies and community input was emphasized.

Key Points:

- Effective Monthly Reports
- Clear Goals, Action Items, and District Updates
- Policy Reviews
 - Obtain broader information collection and address student behavior

- Practice Better Communication, Transparency, and Lead Time for Board Members to Prepare.
- Board Responsibilities include Setting the Stage for Operational Decisions
- Administrative Tasks include:
 - Engage with interim superintendent and plan the path forward
 - Focus on student, staff, family, and community surveys
 - Understanding community needs

Board Meeting Calendar and Information Sharing

- Create a well-organized board calendar to facilitate broader discussion topics and improve planning and decision-making.
- Practice time management of the workload
- Use a structured operational and technical approach
- Clarify and prioritize needs and wants
- Balance board member needs and set boundaries

Transparency and Communication in Board Operations

- Transparency and communication, with a focus on the inclusion of proper communication used in board operating agreements.
- Clear is kind - explicit is a need
- The challenges of engaging in meaningful discussion, due to board structure
- Improve lead time and communication to ensure adequate time to prepare

Strategic Planning and Policy Development

- Collaborate effort between the board and staff, with a focus on direction and long-term goals.
- Focus on core educational goals
- A proposed strategic plan will be presented

Quadrants of Governance

- Board Responsibility
 - Establish vision, goals, priorities, and adopt policy
 - Approve the budget and allocate resources
 - Monitor district performance
 - Represent the interests of the community
 - Hire, support and evaluate the superintendent
 - Hold the superintendent accountable for results
 - Provide oversight and maintain constituent confidence
- Superintendent Leads
 - Implement the board's vision and priorities
 - Develop administrative procedures
 - Manage district operations and resources

- Hire, supervise, and evaluate district staff
- Lead continuous improvement
- Provide professional recommendations and expertise
- Hold the organization accountable for implementation
- Policy
 - Assume positive intent in communication
 - Allow adequate time to understand complex issues and project competence in public meetings.
 - Maintain a clear vision shared by all stakeholders
- Strategic Plan
 - Create a comprehensive financial plan to ensure long-term stability
 - Address infrastructure needs
 - Review data dashboards to make continuous improvement
 - Prioritize 30,60,90-day plans for board relevance
- Personnel and Operations
 - The impact of school closures
 - The superintendent and administrative team work with the board to develop and implement curriculum policies.
 - Create a policy committee to review and engage in policy development
 - Need better tracking and communication of ongoing projects
 - Conduct regular reviews and adjustments of tasks and projects
 - Need more efficient information sharing and timely follow-ups
 - Focus of Next Retreat: Refining the District-Level Strategic Plan
- Policy Development
 - Create a strategic plan in guiding the journey and achieving the vision
 - Engage in intentional conversations and proactive approaches to AI and other emerging technologies.
 - Use a strategic plan and vision to address long-term issues

Enrollment Growth and Financial Planning

- Understanding enrollment growth and the impact of financial constraints on the district's operations.
- Regular financial updates and long-term planning to address enrollment and financial challenges.

Curriculum and Policy Decision-Making

- Create balance between policy and administrative decisions
- Use community engagement and input in curriculum development

- Set clear policies and administrative guidelines to support effective curriculum implementation.

Meetings Law and Public Meeting Practices

- Understand and practice public meetings law and rules to ensure effective governance
- Entire board engagement with all voices being heard
- Ongoing training and engagement with legal experts to stay informed about meetings law.
- Create a supportive and inclusive environment for board meetings
- The district vision must be shared and understood by all, not simply imposed

Information Sharing and Access Suggestions

- Quarterly review information made available in one accessible location
- Access to key activities, benchmarks, and goals
- Timely follow-up procedures with accountability of those responsibilities
- Create a board request tracker to address unanswered questions
- Set deadlines for information requests and ensure all materials are delivered by a specific time prior to meetings.
- Avoid last-minute surprises

— *Retreat Break 10:52 - 11:10 a.m.* —

Following the break, the meeting focused on the review of the report card system. Opinions from some teachers and parents regarding grading policies, including the need to address student behavior, particularly bullying; and the importance of clear processes and community input in educational policies was touched upon. The board discussed the importance of representing community concerns and desires as an elected official and the need for clear expectations throughout each grade level to ensure success.

Shared Responsibilities of the Board and Superintendent

- Board members communicate the community's needs and make informed decisions
- Build mutual respect and trust, with a call for the board to follow policies and the superintendent to provide necessary support and information.
- Student success
- Encourage community engagement and provide an organizational culture
- Create balance between building trust and establishing accountability in governance
- Strategic planning
- Continuous improvement

Operating Agreements and Policy Adherence

The Team discussed putting agreements into practice and the challenges in governance and communications, which included adherence to the role of the board, maintaining trust and effective communication, tracking information in the minutes, and tracking requests. Board members noted that when lacking sufficient information to make a decision there should be cultural appropriateness in tabling decisions. The board agreed that the operating agreement should focus on the relationship and mutual respect between the board and superintendent. An operating agreement is seen as a tool to memorialize the relationship and partnership between the superintendent and the board, while reflecting the needs and experience of each other.

Key Points

- Timely, Transparent Information Exchange
- Effective Use of Policies
- Establishing a Clear Complaint Process
- Avoid Personal Agendas
- Apply Policy Evenly & Unconditionally

Participants discussed establishing cadence for presentations, the pressures to provide information immediately, meeting scheduling difficulties, and operational and legal considerations.

Budget and Legislative Advocacy

- Better articulation of budget needs to legislators
- Upward advocacy and delivery of the correct message to legislators
- Use task tracking to avoid wasting effort

— *Retreat Lunch Break 12:45 - 1:39 p.m.* —

Complaint Process and Public Comment

- Set a clear complaint process, including public comment and follow-up
- View complaints against the board as coaching opportunities
- Co-ownership of agreements, actions, and learnings
- Strategic and purposeful legislative advocacy

Legislative Advocacy and Strategic Planning

- Early strategic planning
- Districts should join forces to carry a consistent message to legislators
- Present a draft legislative plan to the board, engage with the superintendent's council
- Use complete information to make effective decisions

Participants discussed challenges and policies regarding board member school visits, which included topics such as limited access, conflicting policies, superintendent coordination, and transparency of policy. The consensus was taken to establish a clear, non-disruptive process for board members to effectively engage with schools.

Trust and Relationship Building

- Trust and relationship-building between board members and the superintendent
- Maintaining balance of authority and trust with principals

Balancing Access

- Limit classroom disruptions
- Acknowledge the principal's workload
- Set a clear and concise board member visiting process
- Communications between board member and teacher and understanding the school environment.

The need for a formal document versus capturing themes and intentions was debated. The agenda-setting process was addressed, suggesting a collaborative approach involving board members and the superintendent.

Productive Conversations, Meeting Flow, and Information Management

- Respect people's time
- Articulate your needs
- Monitor the time frames of agenda topic discussions
- Engage in rich discussions
- Use a timely, transparent, and systemized information flow to avoid forced decisions

Governance roles and the intersection of responsibilities between the board and superintendent were talked about. The complaint process and its placement within the governance roles was touched on. The discussion included the concept of accountability and co-ownerships. The importance of continuous improvement to learning and adjusting based on accountability, in addition the need for clear, kind, and explicit communication within the operating agreement was emphasized.

Agenda Setting and Meeting Conduct

- The Meeting Agenda process
 - Establish a clear procedure for setting the agenda
 - Set priorities & establish action plans
- Legislative clarification of public laws and Oregon Government and Ethics Commission (OGE) guidance.
- Use of a policy alignment with the operating agreement
- Follow existing policies
- Establish an operating agreement to focus on relationship themes rather than procedural details.
- Use a co-developed tool that balances clarity and flexibility

— *Retreat Break 3:06 - 3:31 p.m.* —

Participants engaged in a prioritization plan activity, using the 30,60,90-day parking lot concept.

Board Member Coordination, Special Meetings, and Documentation

- Procedures involving serial communication and special meeting requests
 - Written procedures and the continued improvement of them for board coordination of special meetings.
 - Use clear communication channels and maintain the integrity of public meetings law.
 - Document procedures to ensure clarity and accountability
 - Use a clear process for setting the agenda and the roles of the superintendent and leadership team.
- Possible development of a meeting agenda guide to stay on track, without engaging in serial communication.
- Board administrator's role in facilitation and coordination of special meetings

- Consideration of an attorney consult to clarify the process and ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Establish Accountability and Follow-Through

- Accountability - Co-ownership of agreements, actions, and findings
- Acknowledge and prepare for greater financial challenges
- Use of survey data to discover the root of enrollment decline
- Use of survey data to discover overall satisfaction of district employees
- Compare homeschooling data (rise of enrollment) to Springfield Public Schools (decline of enrollment) to better understand why.
- Student behavior, experience, and learning
- Legislative plan

Participants discussed constructive listening, trust building, and positive communications, while focusing on governance. Acknowledgement and representation of classified employees, avenues to highlight school progress, advocacy and working with legislation, and school visits were among the many topics discussed.

Participants were encouraged to:

- Recognize and celebrate progress while maintaining accountability and a student-centered focus.
- Display a positive attitude
- Giving credit publicly and handling concerns privately and constructively
- Admit mistakes, correct them, and apologize as needed
- Listen to all stakeholders and avoid decisions being made by the loudest voices
- Treat district leaders as professional partners
- Avoid personal agendas
- Create room to discuss challenges honestly
- Apply policies and expectations consistently
- Set goals specific to student needs
- Continuous improvement and refinement
- Maintain an aspirational view of the future while honoring the past

6. ADJOURNMENT

Having concluded a full day of training, Chair Light adjourned the Board Retreat at 4:33 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Trenay Ryan, LCOG)