Jefferson County School District 509J
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# 2026-2027 BOARD MEETING AGENDA
## Jefferson County School District 509-J
## Monday, September 14, 2026

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

ACCESS ZOOM MEETING HERE

Phone: 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
Meeting ID: 849 0345 3439 Passcode: 321835

**2026-2027 Board of Directors:**
Chair Laurie Danzuka, Vice Chair Kevin Richards, Jacob Struck, Regina Mitchell and Courtney Snead

***[Note: No Work Session this month.]***

# REGULAR SESSION @5:30PM

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS ATTENDANCE:** Chair Laurie Danzuka, Vice Chair Kevin Richards Regina Mitchell

**ABSENT:** Jacob Struck, Courtney Snead

1. **WELCOME - REGULAR SESSION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE /BOARD MEMBER ROLL CALL**

With no work session this month, Board Chair Laurie Danzuka called the regular session meeting to order at 5:31PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Board Secretary noted board member attendance for the record.

2. **AGENDA ADOPTION**

Board Chair Laurie Danzuka asked if there were questions or updates to the agenda and called for a motion. Superintendent Jay Mathisen informed the board that the personnel sheet was updated to add one coach and it is located in the front of their binders.

Regina Mitchell made a motion to approve the agenda with the update as presented; a vote was taken and motion carried unanimously - **APPROVED 3/0.**

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

3. **INFORMATION / PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS / COMMUNICATION / DISCUSSION *ITEMS***

3.1. **Hispanic Heritage Month 2026 Proclamation** - September 15 to October 15, 2026

Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to page 3 of their board packet and read the proclamation for Hispanic Heritage Month 2026 (September 15 to October 15, 2026).

**3.2. 2026-2027 Start-up Enrollment Report**

Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to the independent handout and explained the enrollment report dated September 14, 2026. He explained that it was not included in the meeting packet because the school year is only four school days underway, enrollment numbers are expected to fluctuate and may decrease following the 10-day drop, when students who have not attended for 10 consecutive days are

removed from enrollment. He explained that the current enrollment is 29 students above budget projections. Based on enrollment trends from recent years, it is anticipated that the October 1 enrollment count may be close to the current projection, which is encouraging.

Kindergarten enrollment is currently 171 students, significantly below the projected enrollment. A decline in kindergarten enrollment had been anticipated for the following school year, and the current numbers may indicate that the anticipated decline has occurred one year earlier than expected. Enrollment trends for next year's incoming kindergarten class will continue to be monitored. Overall, current enrollment appears to be in a favorable position relative to budget projections for the school year.

3.3. **Student Representative Introduction** - New School Year 2026-2027
Superintendent Jay Mathisen explained that there were plans to welcome last year's student representative. MHS Principal Tony Summers who attended the board meeting informed them that she is currently at theater tryouts, and if she finishes in time to report she will come and report.

3.4. **Updated 2026-2027 Board Calendar** - Potential Action Item
Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to page 5 of the packet and explained that it is being brought back for final approval. It was discussed at the last board meeting. The primary changes included shifting several workshops to better align with the state data release and new metrics related to accountability, which are part of the district's strategic path forward. An additional change was made to reflect the potential for an executive session, which was ultimately canceled for this evening.

No other significant changes were made beyond adjustments to the workshop schedule. The board will see a similar number of workshops, with a continued focus on data, storytelling, and related topics. One workshop remains open for a mid-year topic based on comments and feedback from the board.

**3.5. SRO Contract(s) Update**
3.5.1. Jefferson County Sheriff
3.5.2. WSK8
Director of Operations Simon White explained that the Jefferson County SRO contract is currently in the hands of the City and then Commissioner for a signature approval process. He explained that he should have it back to the board for signature next month. He explained there are no major changes, just an update on costs for the SROs.

The Warm Springs K-8 SRO contract is currently under review. The Warm Springs Police Department has a designated person there for the next two months and then they are going to have another staff member who is going through the SRO training available.

Board Chair Laurie Danzuka asked for clarification about what had been discussed before, about changing the SRO contracts to where the board is not having to revisit them every year.

Superintendent Jay Mathisen clarified, Jefferson County have agreed to do the three-year contract, but there are some steps within Warm Springs that they want to revisit each year, and so one of them will have a three-year contract and the other (Warm Springs) will continue on a year-to-year basis.

Board Chair Laurie Danzuka thanked him for the clarification and without questions or further discussion proceeded to the next agenda item.

**3.6. WSK8 HVAC Update**
Director of Operations and Safety Simon White reported that the WSK8 HVAC system replacement was completed over the summer on schedule and within budget. The system is fully operational, with only a few minor punch-list items remaining. Temperature monitoring over the past two weeks has shown good overall performance, with some minor fluctuations as temperatures are adjusted during morning and evening

periods. Overall, the new system is performing well and is expected to provide a significant benefit to students and staff.

**3.7. 2025-2026 Integrated Annual Report**
Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to pages 6-8 of their board packet for the 2025-2026 Annual Report.

Director Regina Mitchell requested clarification regarding the program Assistant Superintendent Shay Mikalson had taken on and whether it was the additional program previously discussed. Superintendent Jay Mathisen clarified that this is a separate program from the approximately $3 million coaching investment. The district has continued to make similar investments over several years. This item is included as part of the district's annual state report, with the final two questions submitted to the Board for review. No Board action is required at this time.

Board Chair Laurie Danzuka asked about the district's progress in recruiting and retaining specialized staff and whether the positive trend is expected to continue. Assistant Superintendent Shay Mikalson reported continued improvement, noting that most special education teaching positions were filled by June, an improvement over prior years.

Assistant Superintendent Shay Mikalson also reported that overall certified staff retention has increased from approximately 62% five years ago to approximately 87% currently, with all administrators returning. Despite this progress, retention of specialized staff, particularly in special education and life skills positions, remains an area of focus. Recruitment and compensation strategies have helped address staffing challenges, but the district continues to monitor retention in these hard-to-fill positions.

With no further discussion or questions, Board Chair Danzuka proceeded to the next agenda item.

3.8. **Budget Committee Application Process** – *Potential Action Item*
The Board discussed the process for filling one vacant Budget Committee position. The application period closed August 31, and five applications were received.

The Board discussed options for reviewing the applicants and selecting an appointee. Members agreed that all five applicants should be invited to attend the October Board meeting to briefly address the Board and respond to questions.

Superintendent Mathisen noted that a Board-subcommittee meeting for the purpose of developing a recommendation would constitute a public meeting. The Board determined that having all applicants meet with the full Board would be the most efficient approach.

Superintendent Mathisen said that he and the board secretary will work to invite all five applicants to the October Board meeting. Board leadership will determine the format and timing of the applicant presentations. The Board will consider appointing a candidate after reviewing the applications and following the October meeting - with an appointment in November.

3.9. **2026 National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Convention,** (Buffalo, NY), October 7-10, 2026 *(October 6th departure)*
Superintendent Jay Mathisen reported on the district's continued participation in the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) conference that focuses on Native education and leadership. This agenda item has been included as part of the district's effort to broaden the number of 509J leaders who have the opportunity to attend and develop a shared understanding of the importance of Native education and related issues.

Superintendent Jay Mathisen noted that, after several years of intentionally expanding participation, nearly all administrators serving in the district's secondary schools will have had the opportunity to attend, along with several district-level administrators. This year's attendees will include Director of Curriculum Billie White from the district administrative team, and Assistant Principal Gena Bennett from at WSK8, Board Chair Laurie Danzuka, and Board Director Courtney Snead. He emphasized that the experience has been a worthwhile investment and has helped inform leadership practices and decision-making across the district.

The Board members agreed that the conference provides valuable opportunities to learn from outside perspectives, explore additional resources and approaches, and strengthen the district's ability to serve students and families. They noted that the conference is consistently valuable and helps leaders avoid becoming limited to a single way of thinking.

Director Regina Mitchell shared that she would be unable to attend this year but expressed appreciation for her previous experience at the conference and indicated that she looked forward to hearing about this years' experience from the attendees.

Assistant Superintendent Shay Mikalson also highlighted the value of the district's partnership with Oregon Department of Education coaches and noted that two members of the ODE team will independently be attending the conference as well.

3.10. **OSBA Annual Convention, November 12-14, 2026**, Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront, Registration information update

Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to page 10 of their board packet and provided an update regarding the upcoming OSBA convention in Portland. He explained, the convention schedule is similar to previous years, with general registration opening tomorrow.

The Board Secretary has already begun making lodging reservations and coordinating arrangements to ensure the Board is accommodated comfortably. He requested Board members who plan to attend notify the board secretary and specify the nights they will need lodging.

3.11. Strategic Path Forward
- 3.11.1. Part A - Draft
- 3.11.2. Part B - Process

Superintendent Jay Mathisen directed board members to pages 12-13 (Part A, page 12 and Part B, page 13), he reviewed the revised Part A of the Strategic Path Forward and introduced Part B, which reflects themes identified during the August Board retreat. Part B identifies **three areas** of focus for the next one to three years:

1. Elevating student voice
2. Ensuring sustainability
3. Delivering high-quality student experiences

Superintendent Mathisen asked for Board feedback and suggested these areas could potentially serve as the foundation for future Board goals.

Board members expressed support for the framework and emphasized the importance of:

- Maintaining accountability and measurable progress.
- Being mindful of the District's ongoing financial and staffing challenges while continuing to pursue improvement rather than maintaining the status quo.
- Clearly communicating priorities and the District's direction to the community, voters, and Budget Committee.
- Using meaningful performance metrics to evaluate progress and, where appropriate, compare results with similar districts.

- Recognizing that existing programs and priorities, including Career and Technical Education (CTE), remain important even when they are not specifically identified as a metric or focus area in the current framework.

The Board discussed how the three focus areas might be incorporated into future work sessions and performance monitoring. Board members agreed that the work should be approached as a multi-year process, with priorities sequenced based on urgency rather than attempting to address all areas at once. Future work sessions may include reviewing existing data and outcomes, hearing directly from students or staff, and identifying specific next steps.

The Board expressed appreciation for the framework, noting that it provides a clear articulation of shared priorities and creates an opportunity to maintain focus and accountability over time.

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.

*[In-person from sign-in sheet - no notes or formal written comment was submitted to the board secretary; therefore, the following is a brief summary of the topic shared as a public comment during the meeting. Provided with dictation / translation assistance].*

Sam Robinson addressed the Board regarding updates to Unity for Inclusion and his efforts to expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in Japanese cultural activities.

Mr. Robinson stated that, after previously discussing the Sister City program and related efforts to establish a relationship with the MHS Japan Club, he and his board of directors have decided not to pursue that relationship at this time. He explained that he has instead established the High Desert Japan Social Club, which is intended for individuals with disabilities, ages 15 and older, who are interested in Japanese culture, including anime, history, manga, and trading card games such as Pokémon and Yu-Gi-Oh!

Mr. Robinson shared that he has developed connections with individuals involved in Oregon's developmental disability system, including a Japanese professor who is currently learning about Oregon's person-centered disability services. He expressed appreciation for the support he has received and stated that he hopes to build future cultural relationships in Japan, including in Kanagawa Prefecture and Tomi City.

Mr. Robinson said the High Desert Japan Social Club is intended to provide an inclusive opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate in cultural exchange and activities. He requested that the District share the club's flyer with special education teachers and students age 15 and older who may be interested.

Mr. Robinson noted that the next club meeting will have a Halloween theme and that additional information and a flyer will be provided. He thanked the Board and District staff for their time and support.

Board Chair Laurie Danzuka thanked Mr. Robinson for coming to speak and proceeded to the Action Items on the agenda.

5. **ACTION ITEMS**

**5.1. CONSENT AGENDA**

5.1.1. Approval of Regular Session Board Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2026
5.1.2. Personnel Action
5.1.3. Resolution #27-05, Misc. Grants & Donations ($11,273)
5.1.4. Financial Report

Board Chair Laurie Danzuka called for a motion on the consent agenda.

Kevin Richards made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented; a vote was taken and motion carried unanimously - **APPROVED 3/0.**

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

**5.2. UPDATED 2026-2027 BOARD CALENDAR**

Board Chair Laurie Danzuka called for a motion to update the 2026-2027 Board Calendar as presented.

Regina Mitchell made a motion to approved the updated 2026-2027 board calendar as presented; a vote was taken and motion carried unanimously - **APPROVED 3/0.**

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

**5.3. BUDGET COMMITTEE APPLICATION PROCESS** *(if needed)*

Superintendent Jay Mathisen informed the board, based on the conversation earlier in the meeting there is no action required at this time; he will work with the board secretary to invite the applicants to the next meeting for a brief introduction and application review by the board.

No formal action was taken.

6. **BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Kevin Richards** - shared that one of his highlights was coming in and seeing Regina at the table. He welcomed her back and expressed how glad everyone was to have her back, noting that she looked like she was doing well. Another highlight was seeing Lori behind the gavel. Kevin shared that the Board is better with Laurie on it and thanked her for her long service. Kevin also shared a personal highlight: his oldest child is now in high school. He reflected on walking around during the school open house events and seeing his middle schooler and high schooler at school walking the same halls where he attended.
- **Regina Mitchell** - thanked everyone and shared that she has missed being here. She has been trying to keep up with what has been happening, including participating in some meetings via Zoom and attending in person when she could. Her goal is to become more active as she continues to get better and stronger. Regina shared that Superintendent Jay Mathisen has been very supportive in keeping her up to date while also allowing her the time and space to recover. She noted that it was a year ago this week that she was diagnosed with liver cancer and initially was not sure whether surgery would even be an option. She credited her physician for advocating for her at the tumor board, which ultimately led to a successful operation. She recalled that the first thing she remembers after coming out of surgery was hearing, “We got it all. We got all of it.” Her next steps are to continue getting stronger and become more involved in what is happening in the schools.
- **Laurie Danzuka -** welcomed Regina back and shared how great it is to see her. With school back in session, Laurie spent most of her day at WSK8, walking the halls, watching students at lunchtime, and greeting staff and teachers. She enjoyed seeing returning teachers as well as some of the new teachers and hearing the excitement as everyone started another school year. Laurie also shared a personal highlight: her son is now in sixth grade and officially a middle schooler. She joked that the transition has

been tougher on her than on him and reflected on how quickly he is growing up. She also highlighted the back-to-school barbecue, which she said was the biggest one yet, with approximately 700 meals served. Many of the vendors and groups ran out of materials and giveaways, but Laurie appreciated seeing so many families gathered, meeting teachers, and being part of the school community.

- **Superintendent Jay Mathisen** - shared that a major highlight has been the very positive start to the school year across all of the schools. He noted that he has shared some of the positive stories in recent Friday Board Notes. He shared that when a high school principal beginning his fifth year says it was the best kickoff ever, that says something. Staff members have echoed that sentiment, and similar positive feedback has been heard from school to school. He also highlighted the positive open house events, including those he attended and those he heard about from others. Fall athletics have also gotten off to a great start, with teams performing well, students having opportunities to improve, and strong community support at events. Superintendent Jay Mathisen emphasized that while a positive start can sometimes be easy to overlook because it is what everyone hopes and expects, it is important to recognize and celebrate it. He credited the many people working behind the scenes—including those in classrooms, kitchens, maintenance, transportation, and other areas—for making the strong start possible.
- **Assistant Superintendent Shay Mikalson** - echoed the Superintendent's comments and highlighted the strength that comes from having new people join the team, including Director of Student Services Grant Hayball. He also emphasized the strong leadership across all areas of the district. He highlighted the success of summer programming and recognized Simon White for leading the HVAC project, which had to be completed on a very tight timeline. He expressed appreciation for Simon's work in getting the project completed successfully. He also recognized Billie White's work with curriculum and services, as well as the technology team, including Jay Patrick and Dustin Olson, for ensuring that technology services are in place. He noted that projections and planning help build a strong foundation for the district. Assistant Superintendent Shay Mikalson emphasized that when things go well, it can be easy to overlook the significant amount of work happening behind the scenes. He expressed appreciation for the entire team and the building leaders, noting that the district has had the same building leaders throughout his four years, which provides valuable consistency and experience. He also recognized the experience and dedication of teachers and support staff. While there is always room for improvement, he emphasized the importance of recognizing the people and strengths already present in the district. He concluded that the strong start to the school year is the result of many great people doing a lot of work each day.

**[Follow-up to 3.3 Student Representative Introduction - New School Year 2026-2027]**
Board Chair Laurie Danzuka requested that MHS Principal Tony Summers read the student rep report that was prepared for the board.

MHS Principal Tony Summers shared:

- ✓ That the start of the school year has been a great success despite the challenges presented by the fires and smoke.
- ✓ The ninth-grade class has had a strong start, with students being eased into the transition to high school. A significant number of students were also able to make up credits during the summer.
- ✓ The “Buffs Are Back” event was held last Tuesday and was very successful, with more than 400 people in attendance. The event provided students with an opportunity to learn about clubs and athletic opportunities at the high school. New students were also able to tour the school, locate their classrooms, and become familiar with their lockers.
- ✓ A new policy this year prohibits backpacks in classrooms. The transition has gone smoothly, and the policy has not been as significant an issue as some students initially anticipated. The first few days of school went well, and students and staff were excited to be back.
- ✓ The leadership class has grown significantly, with 15 new students joining leadership this year. The increased participation reflects strong student involvement in school activities.
- ✓ Theater is preparing to present Romeo and Juliet this fall. The Student Representative is there auditioning today.
- ✓ Improvements have also been made to the girls' main hall restroom, including the installation of

partitions and locks on the stall doors.

- ✓ Athletics has seen record participation this year. A total of 239 students are participating in fall sports, including football, boys' and girls' soccer, volleyball, cross country, and cheer. This represents more than one-third of the school's student population participating in fall athletics.
- ✓ *[And with his light-hearted-thoughtful humor Tony shared with a chuckle that the student rep. also expressed appreciation for the MHS principal and shared that she greatly appreciates his leadership and support.]*

7. **REMINDERS / PLANNING AHEAD / MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

- Board Leadership – **Tuesday, October 6, 2026 @NIEA** *(Laurie & Courtney)*
- NIEA Convention (Buffalo, NY), **October 7-10, 2026**
- JCSD 509J 2026-2027 Board Meeting – **Monday, October 12, 2026 @JCSD 509J Board Room**
- Indigenous Peoples Day 2026, - **Monday, October 12, 2026**
- Hispanic Heritage Month 2026 takes place - **September 15 to October 15, 2026**
- 2026 Fall Regional Meeting - **Monday, October 26, 2026** *[5pm dinner, 5:30pm meeting]*
- OSBA Annual Convention, **November 12-14, 2026, Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront**

***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 businesses and without objection, Board Chair Laurie Danzuka adjourned the meeting at 6:30PM.

Draft to Board for approval at next meeting,
**October 12, 2026**

_____
Tessa Bailey, Executive Assistant

_____ _____
Board Chair Laurie Danzuka Superintendent Jay Mathisen

_____ _____
Date Date