



Work Session of the Board of Education

Thursday, December 5, 2024 5:30 PM

Oakdale Middle School Room 230
815 S. Oakdale Ave.
Medford, OR 97501

Michelle Atkinson: Present
Lilia Caballero: Present
Kendell Ferguson: Present
Jeff Kinsella: Present
Suzanne Messer: Present
Michael Williams: Present
Cynthia Wright: Present

A video recording of the Board meeting can be found on the district website at [this link](#). The slide presentation can be viewed by clicking on Extras listed next to the meeting at [this link](#).

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call

Board Chair Cynthia Wright called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called.

Chair Wright welcomed the public, stated the district's vision statement, and read the public meeting civility standards for Medford School District (MSD) Board meetings.

2. Agenda Adjustments and Approval

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

3. Recognitions

3.a. Elementary Cross Country Placers

Superintendent Bret Champion introduced District Athletics and Activities Director Fred Kondziela who led the recognitions. Kondziela thanked the Board for recognizing the elementary cross country placers and shared team results for both boys and girls events. He commended the physical education (PE) teachers, Safe Routes to School Coordinator Julie Van Horn, Administrative Assistant Jennifer Byrne, and Teacher Travis Dick for

their effort in making the event a success. School principals Jordan Gieg, Brent McConaghy, Dan Jones and PE teachers Jackie Auchard, Dave Alonzo, and Austin Manera presented the student athletes with certificates of recognition.

4. Recess

The meeting was briefly recessed in order to take pictures with those recognized.

5. Work Session Items/Possible Action Items

5.a. Annual Comprehensive Finance Report

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Brad Earl, Finance Controller John Petach and Pauly, Rogers & Co. Auditor Kenny Allen (attended via Zoom) presented the annual audit report. Allen directed attention to the Board letter summarizing the results of the audit. He raised an awareness for the district to consider a succession plan as accountants approach retirement age, and commended the finance staff for the awards received and for continuing to do an excellent job.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding a succession plan; expressed appreciation for the detailed introduction letter included in the audit; asked if anything in the audit was new and/or good news; and commended the finance staff for years of consistency.

5.b. Math Instructional Materials Overview

Deputy Superintendent Jeanne Grazioli introduced Curriculum Coordinator Megan Young and Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)/Math Specialist Andrea Kapphahn. Young shared information on the materials selection and the public preview, and Kapphahn shared information regarding the materials recommendations.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding the number of teachers involved in the process; explain the Plus One; clarify if hard back materials and/or digital; appreciate the different paths for high school; making math fun/accelerated program options; training for teachers; piloting and pacing; and encouraged using skilled/experienced teachers to coach new teachers.

5.c. District At-A-Glance Profile Review

Grazioli provided an overview of the District At-A-Glance Profile. She pointed out specific areas including Regular Attenders, Grade 3 English Language Arts, Grade 8 Mathematics, On-Track to Graduate, On-Time Graduation, and Five Year Completion. She pointed out specific areas of improvement and needs improvement, and shared comparison charts.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding benefits of assistant principals; effects of staff longevity; math proficiency/anticipating growth; interesting patterns by grade; and how parents can help (setting higher expectations and volunteering in classrooms).

5.d. Cell Phone Discussion

Chair Wright led a discussion on next steps for Board policy JFCEB – Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media following a districtwide survey and community town hall. Board Directors shared feedback that included student support for use of cell phones at lunches and passing periods; parent support for access to cell phones in case of school emergencies (i.e. school shooting); concern for too much exposure to mass media/effects on mental health (referenced book *Anxious Generation*); teacher support for a policy that requires universal cell phone ban in classrooms (not placing the burden on the teacher); teacher support for teacher discretion/phones used as a tool in some classrooms; Board’s role to make sure the environment is conducive to learning; and clear and consistent guidelines and consequences.

Chair Wright summarized the discussion and recommended staff bring back a revised policy at the next Board meeting, striking out the last part of a sentence that reads, *‘except as allowed by the instructor.’* It was also determined that staff would talk to principals about the suggested revision and share the plus/delta and challenges presented at the next Board meeting.

5.e. Budget Committee Applications

Chair Wright pointed out that the district received one application for the three Budget Committee vacancies and suggested extending the application process through December 18. The Board was in agreement.

5.f. School Board Policies - *first reading*

Board Directors reviewed the policies and administrative regulations and determined the policies would move forward for a second reading and approval at the December 19 Board meeting.

The Board took a break at 6:53 PM. The meeting resumed at 6:59 PM.

5.g. Complaints against Board Member(s)

Chair Wright referred to the two complaints presented at the October 17 Board meeting. She stated there was a current weapons violation referred for investigation and therefore the complaints would be placed in abeyance until the investigation was completed.

Chair Wright directed attention to the complaint filed against a Board member in August that led to the Board voting to investigate the complaint at the Special Board meeting on August 27. She read the formal complaint filed by Executive Director of Security, Leadership and Facilities Ron Havniear into the record. *(The complaint can be found in the Extras area of the online Board meeting at [this link](#).)*

At the prompting of Chair Wright, District Legal Counsel Thad Pauck provided a statement regarding the steps taken after the Board approved to have the complaint investigated, which led to the independent investigation by Attorney Jollee Patterson.

Board Director Michael Williams stated he was advised by his attorney to leave during this portion of the meeting. Williams exited the meeting at 7:11 PM.

Chair Wright and Vice Chair Kendell Ferguson read the Introduction and Executive Summary; Summary of Allegations and Findings; Applicable District Policies; Discussion of Evidence; Factual Findings; and Policy Determination from the Privileged and Confidential Investigation Report for Medford School District 549C by Jollee Patterson dated November 26, 2024.

At the conclusion of reading excerpts from the investigation report, Chair Wright opened the floor for a motion.

MOTION: I move that we adopt the privileged and confidential investigation report for Medford School District 549C complaint by Ron Havniear regarding Michael Williams by Jollee Patterson, Miller Nash LLP, November 26, 2024. This motion was made by Suzanne Messer and seconded by Jeff Kinsella.

Discussion: Board Director Michelle Atkinson requested clarification on what it meant to adopt the findings. Pauck provided an explanation. Chair Wright expressed appreciation for the thorough investigation and report.

Roll call vote:

Messer: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Atkinson: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Kinsella: Yea, Wright: Yea, Williams: Absent

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

Motion carried.

Following the Board vote, Chair Wright provided an opportunity for Havniear to give a personal and professional impact statement. Havniear provided his statement.

At the conclusion of Havnear's statement, Chair Wright shared an apology on behalf of the Board. Other Board members offered apologies, appreciation, shared personal attacks experienced as a result of recent events, expressed disappointment with the unbalanced media coverage, and voiced a desire to heal and get back to focusing on students.

At the prompting of Chair Wright, Attorney Pauck shared the risk for potential liability if the Board chose to not act on the findings of the investigation. Chair Wright spoke regarding the culture of the organization and the responsibility of the Board as presented in Policy KL. Chair Wright handed out a document that was co-written with Vice Chair Ferguson that included potential restrictions. The restrictions read were as follows:

1. Effective immediately, all communications and/or questions by Mr. Williams regarding Board or School District business must be sent by e-mail to the Board Leadership (Board Chair and Vice Chair), copying the Superintendent, and they will respond as appropriate. Mr. Williams may respond to the Board Secretary regarding scheduled school tours or other scheduled events. Any communication between Mr. Williams, the Superintendent, and other members of the Leadership Team must either be done in writing via text or email, or via recorded zoom conferences.
2. Mr. Williams is prohibited from entering any School District building or grounds unless he is given express prior written permission from the Superintendent; school tours may only be done if scheduled by the Board Secretary and accompanied by another board member, with whom he must remain at all times. Requests to enter School District building(s) or grounds must be made via e-mail, to the Board Leadership and superintendent as authorized in paragraph 1. Any violation of this directive will be deemed a trespass and law enforcement will be contacted as a result. There are some exceptions to this:
 3. Mr. Williams may enter Oakdale Middle School or grounds for purposes of his attendance as a Board Member at scheduled Board meetings, but he may only enter the building of the scheduled meeting and may arrive no earlier than thirty (30) minutes in advance of the officially noticed start time for the meeting. Also,
 4. Mr. Williams may enter the schools that his children attend as a parent when necessary for school functions or to pick up/drop off his children attending the school. And finally,
 5. Mr. Williams' participation in school visits, in-person attendance at Board meetings, or any other school district function that the entire board has been invited to participate in, and parent visits are conditional upon his compliance with the same District safety policies that apply to other members of the public entering MSD property, including not carrying any weapons on his person. Law enforcement will be contacted as a result of any violation of this directive.

6. These restrictions will be reviewed by the Board at the 2025 Organizational Meeting or Board Retreat. If the Board determines that no further issues have been reported, the Board may vote to lift the restrictions at that time.

At the conclusion of reading the proposed restrictions, Chair Wright opened the floor for a motion. Board Director Atkinson requested time to process the restrictions.

The Board took a recess at 8:09 PM. The meeting resumed at 8:16 PM.

Chair Wright explained the intent of the restrictions were meant to be preventative, not punitive. Attorney Pauck answered questions regarding violation and law enforcement and referenced Board policy KGB – Public Conduct on District Property. Chair Wright and Vice Chair Kendell explained the intention of the restrictions as a result of conduct with district staff. Chair Wright read the oath of office all Board members recited when elected, and stressed that Williams was in violation of his oath of office.

MOTION: I move that we accept these as presented. This motion was made by Suzanne Messer and seconded by Jeff Kinsella.

Discussion – Board Directors expressed a desire for getting back to civil discourse and working as a team to move forward.

Roll call vote:

Kinsella: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Messer: Yea, Atkinson: Yea, Wright: Yea, Williams: Absent

Yea: 6, Nay: 0: Absent: 1

Motion carried.

Chair Wright asked Attorney Pauck to draft a formal resolution incorporating the restrictions to present at the next Board meeting for adoption.

6. Consent Agenda

6.a. Staff Assignment Report

6.b. Minutes from previous Board meetings

Hearing no objections, the consent agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

7. Announcements

7.a. December 19 - Board Meeting at 5:30 PM - Oakdale Middle School

Chair Wright noted the next Board meeting scheduled for December 19 at Oakdale Middle School.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Chair of the District School Board
Medford School District

ATTEST:

Superintendent-Clerk

DRAFT