

GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10 JT.
Minutes of Regular Board Work Session

Thursday, January 22, 2026

The Gresham-Barlow School District Board of Directors met in regular session on Thursday, January 22, 2026 in the Large Conference Room of the Public Safety and Schools Building, 1331 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, OR 97030. A Zoom link was provided for virtual meeting attendance.

Board Members present:

Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann.

Cabinet Members present:

Dr. Tracy Klinger, Superintendent
John Koch, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Sara Deboy, Assistant Superintendent
Michael Sweeten, Executive Director of Human Resources

Opening Items

1. Call to Order (6:02 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by the board chair, Blake Petersen.

2. Roll Call (6:02 p.m.)

Directors Coleman-Cox and Farrens were absent from the meeting. Position 7 of the school board is currently vacant. A quorum of the board was in attendance. Additional staff in attendance included Heidi Lasher, Dr. Tim Collins, and Michele Cook.

3. Approve Meeting Agenda (6:02 p.m.)

MOTION 52: Move to approve the meeting agenda as presented. This motion, made by Kris Howatt and seconded by Holly Riegelmann, Carried.

Aye: Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann

Absent: Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens

Aye: 4, No: 0, Absent: 2

Executive Session

4. Recess into Executive Session - Personnel ORS 192.660(2)(b) (6:03 p.m.)

The meeting was recessed into executive session at 6:03 p.m. in order to discuss Personnel pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(b). Executive sessions are closed to the public. Members of the public attending virtually were excused from the meeting and the audio and video portion of the virtual meeting was muted until the end of the executive session. No decision may be made in executive session.

5. Reconvene into Regular Work Session (6:58 p.m.)

Following the executive session, the board reconvened into the special work session at 6:58 p.m. Chair Peteresen shared that the board had the opportunity to discuss an item pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(b). Having had that discussion, the board has three options. They could adopt the recommended decision from staff and the administration, they could defer and request more information, or they can opt to have a hearing.

MOTION 53: Move to adopt the recommendation from the superintendent in regards to the complaint. This motion, made by Holly Riegelmann and seconded by Brenna Puderbaugh, Carried.

Aye: Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann

Absent: Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens

Aye: 4, No: 0, Absent: 2

Information Items

6. Legislative Update (7:02 p.m.)

Superintendent Klinger introduced Lisa Merrick, the Government Affairs Administrator for Multnomah ESD (MESD). Ms. Merrick reviewed upcoming key legislative dates, noting that the short session is more of a sprint. Legislators have bill limits. Each legislator can introduce two policy bills, and the committees can bring five bills. They are entering a challenging budget environment. Last week they convened for their January Legislative Days. They hold these in between legislative sessions and use them to talk about educational topics and policies previously passed. Last week was the bill drop deadline, and they will likely see bills in the next week for what will be introduced. The session begins February 2nd and has to end March 9th. The February 4th Revenue Forecast is a key date because this is the last forecast they will look at before they pass the budget. February 16th is the first chamber deadline, followed by the second deadline February 26th. It is a really compressed timeframe for bills to move through the process. January 2027 is when the next long session will start. The governor can also convene a special session anytime, which could be a possibility depending on the budget and transportation issues.

There has been a need for state budget rebalancing in response to the passage of HR 1 (the “Big Beautiful Bill”) which resulted in reduced funding and revenue to the state due to tax breaks. State agencies have prepared a couple budget reduction scenarios that were presented in November. While the September revenue forecast showed significant impacts to state revenue, the December forecast provided a slightly improved trajectory. Despite net general funds and lottery resources trending up from September, the state still faces a projected budget hole of approximately \$600 million. The Corporate Activity Tax (CAT) is down about \$31 million, but the legislature has been reserving funds in that account and they can draw on those funds if needed. They want to make sure they are distributing those funds knowing that districts have a lot of staff paid out of the CAT tax. The legislature is expected to officially consider budget reductions after February 4th. Because of the HR 1 impacts they are competing with a lot of other department budgets so they will need a clear case that preserving K-12 budgets is critical.

The primary advocacy priority is calling on the legislature to keep K-12 budgets whole. Ms. Merrick highlighted reserve funds that could be used. The education stability fund can only be used for public education and there is no cap on withdrawals. They also have the rainy-day fund with a projected balance of \$2.158 billion. These require a super majority of the legislature to vote on them, and the forecast has to show specific triggers to use the funds. There would have to be a 3/5ths vote in each chamber and the governor would need to declare an emergency. These tools are available and have been used nine times since they were established. The education stability fund was used during the pandemic. Superintendent Klinger added there are also mechanisms for them to replenish the funds. They replenish after the next biennium. The board asked when the kicker is used, and Ms. Merrick shared that the new state economist is using a different method to try and have a more accurate projection.

Ms. Merrick outlined several anticipated bills, including the transportation package which is being moved to the May election instead of November, protections for school meals for all, and bans on school vouchers. One bill will add protection of immigrant and refugee students to the Every Student Belongs statute, and another is looking at how to have districts respond to immigration enforcement on and around schools. Board members expressed concern with this noting that they aren’t notified ahead of time, and it would be difficult to require schools to notify families if they can’t

confirm the present of immigration enforcement. Significant concern was also raised regarding a potential bill overhauling the Quality Education Model (QEM) and Division 22. Board members expressed that this would likely expand administrative reporting requirements rather than streamline them. There was strong consensus that unfunded mandates and excessive reporting hamstringing districts. Members noted that reducing these requirements is the most viable cost-containment strategy available. Leadership added that facing budget cuts might force districts to choose between technical compliance (Division 22) and maintaining student education standards.

Ms. Merrick shared information about the Advocacy Day scheduled for February 13th. It is open to any MESD district. Attendees will receive legislative training in the morning and meet with lawmakers between 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. They may be able to sit in on committee meetings, or if there is a bill hearing they might be able to sign up to testify. The deadline to register is February 5th, and student representatives are welcome. Superintendent Klinger noted that they will have to look at the long game. There are some opportunities for this year, but this is about future years as well. They can learn about what they don't know and how to be really great advocates.

Ms. Merrick highlighted challenges and opportunities for 2026 and beyond. The HR 1 cuts to human services will really dominate the conversations for year to come. The co-chairs of the budget committees have hesitancy to use reserves because they don't want to dip into reserves and not have enough for future bienniums. There is going to be conversation on disconnecting Oregon from the federal tax code. While HR 1 implemented tax cuts, it also did some good things like not taxing overtime. They are also heading into the election year with lots of elections in November, including for governor. There is a lot of opportunity to continue to engage legislators on the unfunded mandates. They are funding education but not getting the return on investment they hope for. They will also continue to talk about PERS and how states fund pensions differently so it is not an apples to apples comparison. If they can drill down that information to see how PERS is impacting education budgets they will have a better understanding of where they rank. There is the potential for bold actions with lots of states dealing with declining enrollment. This is a time to bring forward ideas, look at how the state distributes dollars, and re-look at the state distribution formula. There was discussion around federal funds possibly being withheld from Oregon since it is a state with sanctuary cities, what the appeal process would be, and how long federal funds could be tied up.

Recess/Reconvene

Board Recess (7:45 pm.)

The meeting was recessed at 7:45 p.m. and reconvened at 7:55 p.m.

7. Social Science Curriculum Adoption (7:55 p.m.)

Dr. Collins and Ms. Lasher provided an update on the current Social Science Curriculum Adoption. Dr. Collins noted that the adoption process looks very similar to previous ones presented to the board. It is a very collaborative process with teachers and the community. At the beginning of each adoption cycle they look at current best practices in each content area. Recently, they have really focused on elevating discourse and student speech. They want materials to reflect best practices, prioritize variabilities of learners, and make sure the curriculum meets the needs of all students. They are also focusing on the DLI program and making sure tools are available in multiple languages in order to use the same curricula whether in English or Spanish. They are centering student voice by testing and piloting curriculum in the classroom setting so students can say what they like and don't like. They also give chances for those not in the pilot to provide feedback.

Ms. Lasher shared key factors in the adoption noting that 38 educators are involved in the process. This includes English instruction teachers, DLI teachers, coaches, administrators, EML specialists, and special education coaches. The K-2 grades are engaging in an independent adoption process by using the literacy curriculum Wonders. They are looking at adopting it for social science and providing supplementary materials and lessons to go along with the curriculum. In

reviewing the standards for teachers, they have literacy curriculum, math, social science, science and SEL (social emotional learning). Most of the social science standards could be taught in their literacy block. The team voted that this would be the best option. They were going to use the same process with Wonders for grades 3-5, but due to the depth of standards they weren't able to meet them through additional picture books and resources. They determined they needed to adopt a curriculum for those grade levels.

Dr. Collins shared that for grades 6-12 they put social science on hold for a year. They started with grades 6-8 in October by looking at seven curriculum packages, then narrowed it to four that aligned with best practices. They got additional information from publishers and are piloting two that the middle school team thought were the best options moving forward. They will start the high school piece in about two months. New social science standards were adopted about a year ago, and the state finalized the curriculum packages approved by the state. They collaborated with MESD on Social Science for a Better World and the curriculum adoption has been a continuation of that work.

Ms. Lasher provided an overview of the timeline, noting they started the process last school year working with MESD. They spent time learning from local tribal members, then dove into Tribal History resources that ODE has available. They learned from a local person who is a Holocaust survivor, and the Jewish center brought them materials. This year they reviewed the new standards with ODE and MESD. Dr. Collins added that the team developed a look-for tool to highlight key ideas within those standards. What are the things they should look for in each curriculum package, does it come in multiple languages, does it have resources for teaching students on IEPs or resources for project-based learning. The middle school team is currently doing pilot project number one which will last about four weeks. They will come back together for curriculum two. Ms. Lasher noted at the elementary level they reviewed picture books and lesson plan development. They will use ODE's IMET (Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool) review tool to look at Wonders. The IMET is a tool that ODE puts together each year to assist with independent adoptions.

Ms. Lasher reviewed the next steps for elementary noting they will continue aligning lessons to the literacy curriculum in the curriculum adoption. They have been consulting with ODE and will pilot lessons from the curriculum they select and also pilot the lesson plans they are developing for K-2. Dr. Collins shared that the two curricula they will pilot next month are TCI and Imagine Learning. They will be able to browse the online platforms and the curriculum, and they will gather input from those not involved. The goal is to bring the first reading to the board in April so they can adopt it in May.

Following the overview, there was discussion about ways to have community engagement and collaboration for the curriculum adoption. Sometimes gathering community voice has been a challenge in the past. Board members noted that the community forums have been successful and a forum where people could ask questions might work for this. The board had conversation around important aspects of the curriculum such as critical thinking, being able to see things from two perspectives, and teachers being able to remove their opinions and be non-biased. Social Science brings in the cultural aspect and lets them think about who they are and how they interact with others. There is opportunity for robust conversation, but also fear over how it is being taught. Board members asked how frequently they update social science. Dr. Collins shared that the standards are on a 7-year cycle. By the time of the next adoption 7-years of history will have passed. As they look at the standards, a key element is thinking about multiple perspectives, how do they tell the story and who is telling the story. It needs to help students see themselves in the narrative. How do they elevate the stories, help tell the complete picture, and help students understand there are multiple perspectives. Even if they disagree, there are ways to disagree respectfully.

8. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Implementation Update (8:26 p.m.)

Ms. Cook provided the annual update on MTSS implementation by reviewing the MTSS definition, providing an overview of implementation data, and sharing hurdles and accomplishments during the process. They have taken the approach of equity driven MTSS. The district utilizes the Swift Schools framework, a national model for ongoing improvement, along

with fidelity integrity assessments to measure progress. The focus remains on organizing adult teams with clear protocols to analyze data and determine if current systems are driving equitable student outcomes. Ms. Cook noted that implementation is expanding, with the district measuring progress on an increasing number of components each year, moving from four to eight items, though she acknowledged that this is "deep work" that requires meeting schools where they are and building their capacity. Ms. Cook reviewed graphs showing where they started and where they are currently with implementation. Each year more components are being implemented at the district level, and schools continue to implement more components over time. It has taken time to prepare a system that large at the high school level.

The districtwide focus on attendance is yielding results, with more students currently on track compared to the same time last year. Ms. Cook discussed the use of Panorama, the data screening tool used to track student grades, interventions, and progress. Usage has increased by 35% since last fall. Panorama is used to screen data in the moment, and it gets more specific and can filter for different focus groups. They can also see what supports have been implemented for students so every teacher can see what has been done for the student for every period. Not every school is fluent and running with it. All of the support staff is, but there are places where classroom teachers are still not there. Board members asked if there is resistance to implementing Panorama. Ms. Cook shared that the primary hurdle remains time constraints. With overflowing responsibilities, teachers need to see how the tool improves efficiency before changing their workflows to fully adopt it.

Action Items

9. Policy Review: First Reading (8:47 p.m.)

Chair Petersen suggested tabling this discussion until more board members were present. There was discussion around whether any of the policy updates were urgent. Mr. Koch confirmed that they are not urgent, and will take discussion for approval. The board did not discuss this item during the meeting and will work to add it to a near term agenda.

10. Budget Committee Appointments (8:49 p.m.)

Chair Petersen shared that he and Vice-Chair Riegelmann reviewed a number of outstanding applications. They narrowed the field and interviewed three candidates prior to the meeting. The quality of applicants willing to step up for this community are incredibly talented, gifted and alert people. He shared that they had any number of candidates they could have recommended. After the interviews and evaluation, they want to recommend to the board Kelby Whittington to serve in position 6 on the budget committee.

MOTION 54: Move to accept the recommendation to appoint Kelby Whittington, Position 6, on the Gresham-Barlow School District Budget Committee provided she accepts. This motion, made by Blake Petersen and seconded by Holly Riegelmann, Carried.

Aye: Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann

Absent: Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens

Aye: 4, No: 0, Absent: 2

Following the motion, there was discussion around their process for filling budget committee vacancies. Earlier in the school year, they reappointed a budget committee member to the vacant position. Moving forward they would like for everyone to go through the application process. This will give them the opportunity to see if others are interested. Chair Petersen shared some background information about Kelby Whittington, noting that she works in the corporate world and is a former educator. She has a passion for education, but works in compliance on a global level. She expressed a strong understanding of rules, interacting with people, how groups make decisions, and how groups advise decisions. All three candidates brought an incredible amount of research, and are very aware of the challenges the district is facing.

Request for Tree Removal (8:55 p.m.)

Superintendent Klinger shared that this request came in this week and due to the short timeline was added to the agenda. Hex is the developer purchasing the Salquist property, and they have requested access to the property before the close of escrow to remove trees. The reason comes from the migratory bird act that protects trees with any nests, eggs or young which starts February 1st. The purchaser's concern is that if they can't remove trees before February 1st, it would delay their project work. They are not projected to close on the property before March.

Board members asked if there are any other considerations or if there is anything else that would hold up closing. Superintendent Klinger noted that the city has done the final review of the development and have approved the removal of the trees. There is nothing that they anticipate will hold up closing. She consulted with legal counsel because she had questions about liability. If they are cutting down 114 trees what does that mean if something happens. It was recommended from legal counsel that they decline the request. Board members expressed being uncomfortable with the request based on the other hot topic issues that have surrounded this property. They don't want to degrade any more trust. They also noted that tree code in Gresham is extensive and they don't have enough information to approve. Superintendent Klinger noted that there is not a benefit to the district to approve the request.

MOTION 55: Move to deny Hex LLCs request to remove 114 trees from the Salquist property prior to the close of escrow. This motion, made by Kris Howatt and seconded by Holly Riegelmann, Carried.

Aye: Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann

Absent: Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens

Aye: 4, No: 0, Absent: 2

Discussion Items

11. School Tours (9:03 p.m.)

Chair Petersen shared that they are working on framing out the agenda for the strategic planning retreat scheduled for February. One concept was to plan part of the day by touring facilities to intersect with budgetary considerations. Superintendent Klinger has developed this idea and laid out some concepts. They wanted to provide a window of discussion to review this idea. They are considering having school tours in the morning, then they would convene the meeting at the last stop. They have worked with OSBA to consider what constitutes a school tour, and will likely have written rules to abide by.

Superintendent Klinger explained that the idea came from the Long-Range Facilities Plan and the questions that surfaced from the board. It seemed that the board could benefit from seeing some of these facilities. It is a follow up to the work that has happened in order to clarify and build context. She reviewed priorities for each of the suggested tours noting what the board would see by being there. At Gresham High School, there are a lot of things to see, but the board has made investments in turf. They have also had questions about REY and Flex so they could visit those areas. The school has new sections and old sections so they can see how it all fits together. Hall Elementary is a lower enrollment school when looking at the Long-Range Facilities Plan, but that doesn't mean there is empty space. They could see firsthand how schools are using their spaces strategically. It also has some specialized programs that would be beneficial to see as they think about music, PE, and other opportunities for students. West Orient Middle School was one of the schools that was the lowest scoring and most in need of work on the Long-Range Facilities Plan. The building is a bit of a maze and it has had lots of additions over time.

Following the brief overview, there was time for feedback and questions from the board. They expressed that they like this idea and it does a good job of showing the schools. It can serve as a de facto ice breaker for board members to learn more about each other. They confirmed that they won't be talking about any board business during the tours. Board members asked what to do if questions come up during the tours. Superintendent Klinger noted that questions are

different than decision making. Other board members suggested that they do the tour, then when they start the meeting their first agenda item would be tour debrief. This way they could discuss what they saw and any questions they had. After discussion, Superintendent Klinger confirmed that they would move forward with this concept, and she would invite their Director of Facilities, Terry Taylor, to help answer questions.

12. Future Board Agenda Topics (9:11 p.m.)

Chair Petersen noted that they have worked through the topics list. If board members have requests, they should use the form to submit them. Board members asked for an update on filling the vacant board position. Chair Petersen shared that they have talked about adding a special work session February 12, 2026 to hold interviews. They will confirm availability to make sure they have sufficient board attendance to hold interviews February 12th.

Closing Items

13. Announcements (9:14 p.m.)

Chair Petersen reminded the board of the Legislative Day February 13th. If they plan to attend, they need to respond by February 5th.

February 5, 2026: Regular Board Business Meeting - 7 p.m.
Council Chambers
Public Safety and Schools Building

14. Adjournment (9:14 p.m.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Sarah Avery
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and
Board of Directors

Note: These minutes were approved by the board on _____:sa