

Superintendent's Report, September 2026

As we prepare to welcome students for the 2026-27 school year, our focus is shifting from summer planning and preparation to implementation. Staff across the District have worked throughout the summer to prepare learning environments, welcome new employees, strengthen instructional practices, and create the conditions for a strong start. This work reflects our continued commitment to student success.

Preparing for a Strong Start

The District has intentionally structured this year's start-up schedule to balance professional learning, relationship building, instructional preparation, and time for staff to prepare classrooms and learning environments for students. New licensed staff orientation was held August 27, followed by new classified staff orientation on August 28. All staff then came together August 31 for our districtwide welcome back before moving into building-level meetings and professional learning.

The start-up calendar also protects significant preparation time for teachers. Licensed staff will receive a minimum of 16 hours dedicated to classroom preparation prior to the first day of school. Family meet-and-greet events were held at Hillcrest and North Bay on September 3 and at the Middle and High Schools on September 8. Students will return on a staggered schedule beginning September 9, with Pre-K and kindergarten beginning September 11.

Transportation Transition

A significant milestone in our transition to First Student occurred on August 31 with the arrival of our new bus fleet. To welcome the buses to North Bend, lead buses were escorted by North Bend Police and Fire to the bus yard.

The arrival concluded with a kickoff event for First Student employees as they officially joined the North Bend team for the start of the 2026–27 school year. It was an exciting way to recognize the many drivers, transportation staff, district employees, and community partners who have worked throughout the summer to prepare for this transition.

While the arrival of new buses is certainly visible, the larger goal of this transition is the experience we provide students each day. Considerable work continues around routing, schedules, safety, communication, and operational systems. As with any significant transition, we expect to learn as service begins and will continue identifying opportunities for improvement. We appreciate the work of First Student employees and district staff as we begin this new partnership, with student safety, reliability, and the student experience remaining at the center of our decisions.

Bus Tickets

“Bus discipline has always presented problems for harried bus drivers striving earnestly to deliver their charges safely to schools and homes. If Sally or Junior became too troublesome an effort was made to contact parents. That wasn't always possible nor productive, so a "ticket" system was initiated by the North Bend Bus Company and the North end School Board jointly. It works like a time at bat in a baseball game - three and you're out! It is part of school district policy.”

Apparently, some school district challenges truly are timeless. This is from our August 10, 1970 board archives. Fifty-six years later, we have new buses, seatbelts, cameras, electronic routing, student behavior systems, and considerably more sophisticated approaches to student discipline. Yet, the sophisticated system built on the three strikes rule still applies, and exists to this day.

Some things in public education change considerably. Some things apparently do not.

Strategic Plan: From Plan to Practice

During the 2025-26 school year, the District began implementation of its Board-adopted Strategic Plan. As we enter Year 2, our work is becoming increasingly focused on strengthening the throughline between the District's long-term vision and the daily experiences of students.

Our implementation framework begins with the Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Goals, connects those goals to Signature Strategies and building or department priorities, and ultimately to the practices of staff and the experiences and outcomes of students. This year, district leadership will continue aligning school improvement work, PLCs, Integrated Guidance, state accountability measures, professional learning, and administrator responsibilities within this framework.

Building Culture and Capacity

On August 19, district administrators participated in Lead From Your Best Self with Jay Schroder. The day focused on leadership mindset, relationships, belonging, resilience, areas of control and influence, and the role leaders play in creating the conditions in which staff and students can do their best work. Administrator feedback reinforced the value of continuing this work, particularly around belonging, common language, supporting staff capacity, and creating positive organizational culture.

This learning extended to staff during start-up week through Teach From Your Best Self. Elementary staff participated September 1 and secondary staff September 2. Planned learning included understanding stress reactions, spheres of control and influence, stages of learning, belonging, the Best Self Decision-Making Model, and creating conditions where culture supports learning.

Importantly, this is intended to extend beyond a single professional development day. Staff will have opportunities to continue the work through voluntary book studies, reflection, and ongoing application during the school year, as well as structured follow-up meetings with administration and staff. Our intent is to develop common language and practices that strengthen adult culture while ultimately improving the experience of students.

Instructional Focus

Professional learning during start-up has also been intentionally aligned to a focused set of instructional priorities. Secondary staff participated in the Oregon Writing Project, while elementary staff received training in Renaissance Early Literacy and Renaissance Intelligence, Health Curriculum training, and Tribal History/Shared History learning in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

These learning opportunities support our broader effort to create greater instructional consistency, strengthen the use of assessment and data, and ensure high-quality curriculum and learning experiences across schools. Rather than approaching professional development as a series of disconnected activities, our goal is to align learning opportunities with the priorities established through the Strategic Plan.

Summer Learning: Code, Dance, Create

North Bend Middle School students recently completed the two-week Code, Dance, Create summer learning program. Students participated in a variety of hands-on, outdoor, creative, and experiential learning opportunities designed to engage students in learning beyond the traditional classroom.

The program provided the type of learning experience we want to create whenever possible, learning that is engaging, memorable, connected to students' interests and our community, and provides opportunities to learn in different ways. We are grateful to the educators and staff who helped create such a positive experience for our students.

Preschool Promise

We are excited to see the continued progress of our Preschool Promise learning spaces as final preparations are completed for the start of the school year. We look forward to seeing these spaces filled with students and learning very soon.

Staffing and Scheduling

A tremendous amount of work occurs behind the scenes each year to develop class schedules, assign staff, balance class sizes, and ensure students have access to the courses, programs, and supports they need. This work begins well before students return, and continues up to the first day of school.

It is not uncommon for student and staff schedules to continue changing during the weeks and days leading up to the opening days of school as actual enrollment, student needs, course requests, class sizes, and other factors become clearer. This year has been no exception. Our administrators, counselors, teachers, and support staff will continue evaluating schedules and making adjustments where necessary during the first weeks of school.

We are grateful for the flexibility of our staff and the patience of our students, families, and community as we complete this work. Every decision we make must remain focused on students and creating the best possible learning environment with the resources available to us. There is always more to learn once students are actually in our buildings, and we will actively identify opportunities for improvement and make adjustments when they better serve students.

School Finance Update

Oregon's September Economic and Revenue Forecast provides a generally neutral to slightly positive outlook for state revenues. For the current 2025-27 biennium, projected General Fund and Lottery resources increased by \$59.1 million from the June forecast. At the same time, projected Corporate Activity Tax revenue decreased by \$94.6 million. Corporate Activity Tax revenues support Student Success Act programs, so this remains an area the District will continue to monitor.

Looking ahead to the 2027-29 biennium, projected General Fund and Lottery resources increased by \$568.7 million from the June forecast, while projected Corporate Activity Tax revenues decreased by \$25.7 million. State reserve accounts are currently projected to total approximately \$3.86 billion at the end of the 2025-27 biennium.

The September forecast also no longer projects the approximately \$157 million corporate kicker that had been anticipated in the June forecast for distribution during the next biennium. While the overall revenue picture has improved in several areas, mixed economic indicators and changes in Corporate Activity Tax projections reinforce the importance of continued monitoring as the District begins looking toward the 2027-29 budget cycle.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming weeks, our attention will turn fully to students and the implementation of the systems and priorities developed throughout the summer. District leadership will closely monitor the opening of school, early enrollment and attendance, instructional implementation, student supports, staffing and scheduling, and the effectiveness of our Strategic Plan alignment efforts.

The beginning of a new school year provides an important opportunity to translate planning into practice. There is always a great deal to learn as students return, and we will continue identifying opportunities to improve. We look forward to welcoming students and families back and continuing to build a school system in which our collective work is increasingly aligned, focused, and centered on students.