

GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10 JT.
Minutes of Board Strategic Planning Work Session (Retreat)

Thursday, August 21, 2025

The Gresham-Barlow School District Board of Education held a Regular Strategic Planning Work Session (Retreat) on Thursday, August 21, 2025 in the Media Center at Clear Creek Middle School, 219 NE 219th Ave Gresham, Oregon. A Zoom link was provided for virtual meeting attendance.

Board Members present:

Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens, Kris Howatt, David Ligatich, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann

Cabinet Members present:

Dr. Tracy Klinger, Superintendent
John Koch, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Sara Deboy Van Horn, Assistant Superintendent
Michael Sweeten, Executive Director of Human Resources
Carla Gay, Executive Director of Innovation and Partnerships
Heidi Lasher, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning
Donna Ravenberg, Executive Director of Student Support Services
Jeff Gibbs, Executive Director of Technology Services
Athena Vadnais, Director of Communications and Community Engagement
Pete Bejarano, Director of Finance

Opening Items

1. Continental Breakfast (7:30 - 8:00 a.m.)

Prior to the start of the meeting, the board was served a continental breakfast. No board business was discussed at that time.

2. Call to Order (8:00 a.m.) (8:01 a.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by the board chair, Blake Petersen.

3. Roll Call and Approval of Meeting Agenda (8:00 a.m.) (8:01 a.m.)

All members of the board were in attendance at the meeting.

MOTION 16: Move to approve the meeting agenda as presented. This motion, made by Holly Riegelmann and seconded by Shawn Farrens, Carried.

Aye: Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens, Kris Howatt, David Ligatich, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann

Aye: 7, No: 0

Board Strategic Planning

4. Board Training (8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.) (8:02 a.m.)

Chair Petersen welcomed the group and reviewed some of what they would be doing throughout the day, noting that this meeting is the foundation building of the district. He encouraged them to stay engaged because at the

board level they need seven contributors and perspectives. He asked them to think about what makes a great or dysfunctional team, adding that they can't thrive with disunity at the top. As they begin he wants everyone to assume the best intention from each other and assume integrity, noting that if they do that they will start to represent the community in a real way.

Superintendent Klinger noted that the full cabinet was in attendance so they could all learn together, build perspectives, ask questions, and build relationships. They will see lots of intentional work, and they may have some messiness or unresolved things they have to loop back to. A lot of this is driven by conversations she had with board members in the spring from the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). Feedback is a driver of the work they are doing today in terms of working towards alignment, stronger understanding, and collaboration. She introduced a parking lot document where board members can jot down thoughts, questions or notes throughout the day. Superintendent Klinger shared that the role of cabinet at the meeting is to listen, learn, and deepen their understanding. Their participation will be less active. This is a board driven day with support.

Superintendent Klinger introduced Mike Scott and Erika Lopez, the facilitators for the first half of the day. Mr. Scott is a retired superintendent with many years of experience. He has provided mentoring support to the previous Gresham-Barlow superintendent, and will continue to mentor Superintendent Klinger. Ms. Lopez has eight years of board experience in Hillsboro, including four years with the Oregon School Boards Association Board. She also brings a wealth of public service experience.

Mr. Scott provided an overview of the agenda for their morning training, noting that there would be a lot of foundational work in terms of the role and power of this team. He addressed the norms for the day and encouraged board members to share their own perspective and not be shy about sharing because they need that to make decisions. He added there will be things that need follow up, and that they won't finish everything today. At the start of the meeting, attendees were asked to submit a photo that represents what is important to them and who they are. Ms. Lopez led introductions with each person sharing why they chose their picture, and how long they have been on the board or with the district.

Mr. Scott reviewed the current landscape they are in with education, noting that board members and superintendents are often finding themselves in hostile work environments. Everywhere districts are getting caught up in adult issues that don't have to do with kids. Finding the middle ground is super important because they represent all kids in the community, not just some. Long-term board members and superintendents have a direct impact on student achievement. When there is dysfunction in the board/superintendent team it trickles down in the district.

Mr. Scott asked the group to think about the best team they have been a part of, and think about what the team's purpose was and what made them great. The group took time to talk about teams in their table groups. After table conversations, they were asked to share what would make this team effective based on team conversations. Answers included self-reflection, defined goals, common purpose, being able to speak their mind, accountability, balanced skill sets, respecting each other, and having fun along the way. Mr. Scott noted that in order to make a strong team they have to have an understanding of what their role is and the part they play on the team to make it thrive. Ms. Lopez added that every team has specific roles. In this team it includes the board, superintendent, and cabinet. Each person has their specific role and members can include those with experience, people in the middle, and new board members. The dynamic can get awkward when the superintendent tells the board what they can't do, but they are going to try to explain how to balance that.

Ms. Lopez shared that board members are elected to set the bigger vision of the organization and the goals they are trying to achieve, but they don't get down to the operations. If someone is paid to do a job then it is not their job to do. She noted how her board would work to corral each other when they would get into operations. They want information, but they also have to look at how that might be burdening staff. The board is the what and the organization is the how. She shared a breakdown of the types of things that would be board work, and things that would be superintendent/district work.

Ms. Lopez reviewed the expectation versus reality of getting on the board. When members join the board they have ideas of all the things they want to change, then they start realizing the things they thought would be impacting aren't really in the wheelhouse of a board member. There is some heartbreak, but also a realization that what they can change has more impact on their local community. She noted that she had to realize her circle of influence for what she could impact. Ms. Lopez shared that they had a goal to get to know the other elected officials and from those relationships stemmed benefits and change. They need to know how to cultivate their role to impact the community. Mr. Scott shared examples of how they gathered feedback from students to get more culturally relevant foods in their schools, and that came from conversation from Ms. Lopez as a board member. He encouraged the board not to minimize the amount of influence they have.

Ms. Lopez discussed creating a baseline of understanding when board topics come up. If they are organized as a team with their priorities then they know when to bring things forward. Building consensus within the group will help them know how to prioritize the tasks to bring to the superintendent. She broke attendees into three small groups and assigned each group a Roles and Responsibilities scenario. She asked the groups to discuss what the appropriate action is for the board member or board to take. After discussion, groups shared what they would do in the different scenarios.

Mr. Scott discussed team dynamics noting that whenever a new team is formed the dynamics are going to shift. Unless they are very deliberate in the attention they pay to their teams, they will encounter the five dysfunctions of a team. Teams will go through different stages of team development along the way. Stages of teaming include forming, storming, norming, and performing. Team effectiveness goes up and down based on what stage the team is in. They should predict it is going to happen, and not see it as a failure. Superintendent Klinger added that along with the board, the cabinet team is also in a forming phase. There will be a lot of political components that will try to push them back into storming. Mr. Scott encouraged them to recognize when they are in storming, fall back on their shared goals, and be a district that normalizes feedback. They should also remember to celebrate when something goes well. In the performing stage they are exercising their skills for the role on their team, and they aren't being put in their place or told to stay in their lane.

Ms. Lopez reviewed why working agreements matter, and led the group in reviewing the board operating agreements that are currently in place. She invited them to look for any additions that should be made for the board/superintendent team to function more effectively. Board members suggested removing the year specific expectations included in the bottom of the agreement noting that they are already included above. This would also help make it a permanent document. They discussed adding items that would personalize it for Superintendent Klinger, and possibly adding the process for requesting agenda items. They would like to see information around accountability added to the agreement. The board discussed communicating directly with the superintendent and normalizing small group communication with two or three board members at a time instead of just one on ones. This could allow for more in depth conversation and details. Board members asked about including board training in the agreement, and discussed how board training relates to district goals. Superintendent Klinger shared that she feels it is a strong document. She is a process person and everything the board has talked about she can get behind. This is a good place to get them started, and if it isn't working they can

review it again. Additional items that may come out when they discuss board actions are Superintendent Klinger's interest in gathering feedback from the board, and making the collaborative piece more intentional in the document. They also mentioned self-reflection and where this will keep them working towards improvement.

Mr. Scott added that sometimes they run into issues around confidentiality with district information. Sometimes the superintendent is caught in a weird spot, because while they understand things can be shared with the board, they still have HIPPA and students' rights to abide by. The board may get the gist of information, without all the details and facts because these are areas the district has to adhere to. He asked the board if they are comfortable with the level of information they have been getting. Board members noted that the information they are getting has been improving, and when certain members joined the board they were getting less information. Ms. Lopez and Mr. Scott noted that they identified some topics for review, and they will work with Superintendent Klinger and board leadership to take these ideas, make some edits, and then bring it back to the board for approval.

Recess/Reconvene

Board Recess (10:12 a.m.)

The meeting was recessed at 10:12 a.m. and reconvened at 10:21 a.m.

Board Training (cont.) (10:21 a.m.)

Ms. Lopez provided an overview on the importance of board input in key work. She shared that they are combating public perception of their work because the community doesn't know about board operating agreements and that the board is focusing on governance. Board engagement can happen in many ways including individual conversations with the superintendent, emails to the superintendent, or contacting the board chair with concerns, suggestions, or questions. She shared that for this topic discussion, they will focus on when they are in a board meeting and what that conversation looks like in a public meeting. They reviewed an example of framing the engagement. Board members added that it is helpful when it is specified if an item is just informational or if it is going to be a decision point for the board to take action on later. They also noted that it is important to come to the meeting prepared having reviewed the agenda ahead of time. Asking questions up front to get the answer, but then also ask it in the meeting so the public hears it.

Mr. Scott led the group in board agenda planning for the 2025-26 school year. He noted that it is often helpful to hear from board members about issues they are hearing from the community about, issues they can anticipate coming up, or issues they need more information about. He led the group in a brainstorming activity to list items they would like to potentially see on agendas to start scheduling for the year. He reminded them that just because they write down an item doesn't mean it will be on an agenda because there are other ways to get information. The group took time to individually write down ideas that were then shared out to the whole group. As ideas were shared, Mr. Scott and Ms. Lopez grouped them into categories which included Policy, Budget (high level), Instruction/Student Services, Operations (transportation, nutrition services, etc.), and Miscellaneous. Agenda topic ideas included the following:

- Middle School sports, consider adding an additional sport
- Regular reports on school progress in terms of student enrollment, program cuts and adds, etc.
- Grants
- Sponsorship or other funding to turf the JV fields
- Weighted GPAs
- Bigger bleachers at Barlow to get the same size as Gresham
- Cell phone policy and enforcement
- Chinook Wawa as a second language

- Special Education
- District Office (DO) plan and use of West Gresham
- Process of approving new hires and if it is a legal board requirement
- Textbook adoption, follow-up on recent adoptions
- Bargaining prep for classified
- Criteria for new hires in terms of where they are looking for the candidates, recruiting
- Diversity training
- Budget updates as they get federal impact
- Facilities co-use IGAs with city, county, and community partners

As conversation continues, Mr. Scott asked for board members to continue adding to the list they generated. Superintendent Klinger shared that she will meet with board leadership to start calendaring these items on future agendas. There were questions about the process for requesting board agenda items, and the board reviewed the current process in place. The superintendent meets with Board leadership to map out what is coming. They also have an annual calendar for required items that come to the board throughout the year. This list of additional ideas and topics allows them to front-load them at the beginning of the year. Sometimes topics are strategically timed with other information that would be beneficial. Board members expressed concern that items they requested for this meeting agenda were not approved. Other board members clarified that requested items don't always go on the next agenda and it can take time for an item to get on an agenda. Sometimes timing or budgeting doesn't allow for it or the answer might be no. Mr. Scott noted that there seems to be some frustration around the process and it may need to be addressed on an agenda. The board asked what Hillsboro's process was for agenda requests. Ms. Lopez shared that they put it in their working agreements, and they would send an email to the board chair to add a topic. They planned the whole year out so there were limited times when they could add topics. The chair would bring up the request at a work session, and if the majority of the board was interested, they would add it to an upcoming agenda.

Mr. Scott noted that there are so many community expectations on board members now that it is helpful for them to have the information on these types of items even though they are outside of the board's roles and responsibilities. Even though most topics are on the operations side and not decision points for the board, it shows that there is still a lot of information and clarity the board is wanting.

Mr. Scott shared that the traditional goals model is to have Board Goals and Superintendent Goals which are separate. Goals are not usually done together as a team. What if they didn't have discrete goals for the superintendent and discrete goals for board, but instead have a set of shared team goals. Action by all parties would be necessary to have success with that goal. Going this direction, they will have greater clarity and start to see a partnership allowing them to work together in a strong way. It is easier to do midcourse updates and course corrections along the way. In visualizing how this can work, Superintendent Klinger thought of a 3-legged stool. The seat is where they have their shared goals, and the stool is what the students sit on. The three legs are actions the superintendent and cabinet are working towards, actions the board is taking that is aligned in the shared model, and monitoring their progress on the actions.

The board formed a Board Goals Committee where created four board conditions of safety, belonging, opportunity, and achievement. They tried to take the cumulative efforts of the district with the profile of a graduate, continuous improvement plan, student investment account plan, and tried to provide a framework for alignment. They decided on conditions rather than goals because in strategic planning there are certain conditions for success. These conditions are emblematic of their success, and they layer into their outcomes. Part of the

conditions was also that they wanted it to be a 5-year plan, and goals felt more short term for one or two years. Conditions for success felt like they could be more semi-permanent and long-term. Superintendent Klinger added that while she was serving as assistant superintendent, the board invited her into the goals conversation, which helped her have a deeper understanding of where this is coming from.

Superintendent Klinger shared the definitions for the four conditions, along with 2-3 proposed actions for each condition. Board members appreciated how staff noted what conditions their presentations aligned with last year. Board actions haven't been drafted yet and are still very important. She noted that they are starting with the actions, then they will talk about the evaluation and monitoring piece where more artifacts and evidence will come into play. The conditions are big enough and broad enough to live year to year, while the proposed actions may need adjustments made year to year. Superintendent Klinger shared that the next step is to do some brainstorming to determine the board actions which will help with a self-assessment down the road. Board members were divided into groups and asked to visit the different posters at tables to add possible board actions to the posters. After board members visited each poster, they did a gallery walk to see what was on each poster. They then prioritized two items by initializing next to the two they liked the most. Superintendent Klinger will work with board leadership to get some action steps drafted. They will have more work to do on monitoring.

Mr. Scott introduced the topic of the Superintendent Evaluation, noting that things like ongoing feedback, providing accountability, evidence of work, and staying focused and targeted on your efforts will make it a much stronger process. The first year of a superintendency is super challenging, and the expectations are so high. Having a year one evaluation look differently can be a good thing. Mr. Scott passed out copies of the draft evaluation process for the board to review. He asked them to look at the evaluation process and timeline through the 25-26 school year lens. He then went over the timeline of the proposed process. Board members clarified noting that they've used the OSBA process in the past, and this would be going away from that, instead using the shared goal. They like the change because sometimes the OSBA version is so general that it fit sometimes and other times doesn't. The board asked for clarification on when evidence sharing would take place, and if it would be in quarterly meetings or during one on ones. Superintendent Klinger noted that some updates might be in their newsletter, while others might be a formal presentation.

Mr. Scott reviewed the scoring scale noting that the evaluation would be based on progress. When they are trying to assign a rating in February or March, some of those actions won't be completed yet. Board members asked for an example of a destination based evaluation and what the scoring would look like. Superintendent Klinger shared that if they are thinking about safety, she would want to select actions she believes are achievable, such as communicating safety processes to families or implementing the new discipline handbook. As long as they are making steps toward deeper understanding and implementation that would be showing progress. The board had further discussion on how the rating process would work noting that if they are scoring on progress and not expectation it feels more likely that the superintendent would get 4's because she is progressing towards it. They don't want board members scoring based on different expectations because it will skew the score. Mr. Scott noted that for the Superintendent Evaluation Committee they will want to scoring clarity. There was continued discussion about the scoring process and how things that aren't related to the goals would also be evaluated.

Due to time constraints, Mr. Scott noted that they will have to come back another time to discuss board self-assessment. As a closing activity, Ms. Lopez asked board members to think forward to the February Retreat and asked what they want from that day, and what they would like to discuss. They didn't get to the board self-evaluation or the communication piece so those could be two things that come back in February.

Recess/Reconvene

5. Lunch Recess (12:30 - 1:15 p.m.)

The meeting was recessed at 12:38 p.m. and reconvened at 1:20 p.m.

Board Strategic Planning (cont.)

6. Board Committee and School Engagement Assignments (1:15 - 1:30 p.m.) (1:20 p.m.)

Chair Petersen reviewed the school engagement assignments noting that idea is that while board members are interested in things happening at all schools, they would focus on some specific schools during the year. By the end of a four year term, each board member will have had the chance to focus on all schools in the district. They should notify the superintendent if they plan to visit during the school day, and it is usually preferred if they visit with the superintendent.

Chair Petersen noted that the first order of business for each committee should be to establish a charter, which is a statement of purpose. The committees may need to work with the board secretary to help build these. The group reviewed the types of committee assignments available, and assigned board members to serve on the various committees for this school year. Committee assignments are included below.

2025-26 Board Committee Assignments

Committee	Number	Shawn Farrens	Brenna Puderbaugh	David Ligatich	Holly Riegelmann	Blake Petersen	Kris Howatt	Heather Coleman-Cox	Other / Appointed	Advisory to Superintendent	Advisory to Board
Audit Involvement Team	2				•	•					
Board Evaluation and Goals Committee	3				•	•	•				X
Budget Committee	7	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
City Council Liaison	1		•	•							
Federal Relations Network (ERN) (AKA Advocacy Institute)	4								•		
OSEA CBA Negotiations	1						•				
Gresham-Barlow Education Foundation	2			•				•			
MESD Budget Committee (A 3-year commitment)	1							•			
OSBA Board of Directors	1						•				
OSBA Legislative Policy Committee (LPC)	0							•			
Policy Review Committee	3	•			•	sub	•				X
Superintendent Evaluation Committee	3	•	•		sub	•					X
Middle School Sports Committee	2	•			•					X	

7. District Strategic Goals & Plan on a Page (1:30 - 2:00 p.m.) (1:53 p.m.)

Superintendent Klinger handed out the plan on a page document that outlines the district's strategic goals. They started the day with the big picture, began narrowing down into actions, and this is the next step as they narrow their focus into instructional strategic goals. She shared that this should connect some of the dots around board goals and the superintendent evaluation. Superintendent Klinger reviewed the cabinet and ILT teams noting that some staff serve on both teams. The five strategic goals of inclusive culture, instructional alignment, equity driven MTSS, early literacy/biliteracy, and pathways have been focus areas for the district for a number of years. Each year they adopt different actions or next steps for the key priorities. She reviewed the key things that ILT will focus on for each priority layer, which isn't a lot different than the four key conditions of the board. The plan gives a high-level overview of the priorities in each area.

Following the overview, there was time for questions from the board. They asked what educators mean when they say equitable outcomes. Superintendent Klinger clarified that despite race, socioeconomic backgrounds, or other factors of who they are, they would have similar outcomes. It means not having barriers for students accessing different types of education. The board also asked about the integration of literacy into content areas and content into literacy and if those teachers are having extra training. Superintendent Klinger confirmed they are, and the state just adopted an adolescent literary framework. They have spent time seeing what that looks like and what teachers need.

Recess / Reconvene

8. Board Recess (2:00 - 2:15 p.m.) (2:21 p.m.)

The meeting was recessed at 2:21 p.m. and reconvened at 2:30 p.m.

Board Strategic Planning (cont.)

9. English Language Learner (ELL) Annual Report and Data Overview from 2024-25 (2:15 - 3:15 p.m.) (2:31 p.m.)

The administration provided a data overview covering literacy, math, Emerging Multilingual Learners (EML), and attendance. Mrs. Lasher reviewed the spring iReady and DIBELS data for literacy noting that the data is remaining flat over a 3-year trend. While that trend is remaining flat, most schools are showing high growth. Students measuring a year or more below grade level would need to meet more than typical growth, which is called stretch growth. Board members noted that they've been looking at the achievement gap for years, and asked in terms of longevity if they are closing that gap or pretty much staying steady. Mrs. Lasher shared that in DIBELS they are seeing some students making better progress when they look at specific subtests for these skills. She reviewed their elementary literacy strategies around comprehension, foundational skills, and partner reading & vocabulary routine. They perform these strategies alongside departments to make sure they are meeting the needs of all students.

The board asked about iReady, specifically if it is an accurate assessment and if they are confident that students are reflecting their actual learning. Mrs. Lasher shared that they are always trying to make sure they are eliciting a students' best efforts. Board members noted that content mastery is not required to pass to the next grade and the numbers can be discouraging when they see two grade levels behind for reading. They then have a perception about the fidelity of the numbers. The culture of accountability includes our students and families. There was further discussion around the lack of accountability and soft skills for students.

Dr. Collins noted that there is not a lot that is different at the secondary level. This is the first year doing STAR

reading, which is an assessment that attempts to see if a student will be proficient by the spring. They saw a jump in the winter, then it dropped back in the spring. The growth wasn't perpetuated into the spring and they aren't sure why. They are seeing the same sorts of gaps as with iReady. There is a significant gap for EML versus non EML students. They are seeing the same gap for special education status. Secondary literacy strategies are focusing on unpacking the adolescent literacy framework, literacy strategies, and co-teaching/co-teaching. The board asked if they have done any gender-based analysis of literacy, and Dr. Collins shared that they have not looked at that yet with STAR.

They reviewed the same series of data for iReady and STAR math at the elementary and secondary levels. Mrs. Lasher noted that they are showing a flat trend for math as well. Superintendent Klinger noted that she would love to show the board the strategies they are planning for literacy and math at both the elementary and secondary level. It is one thing to see it on a page and another to see it in action.

Ms. Cook reviewed attendance data including some success data points, 8 year trends by grade level, attendance by race/ethnicity, and strategies that are working. There are different ways that they talk about attendance. For the purposes of this data, they are looking at on-track attendees. When students are attending at least 90% of school there is a correlation that they will graduate. They are focusing on authentic engagement. In 5 out of 7 subgroups they have increased the number of students on track by 3.2%, and are up 5% over the past two years. They are helping people understand the importance of attendance. During the pandemic they did such a good job of telling families when to keep students home, that now they are having to remind them to come back and not stay home every time they get a sniffly nose.

Mrs. Cook noted that they aren't seeing an increase in middle school yet, and those subgroups also remained flat. This is the same for high school. They are seeing progress at elementary, but are flat at the secondary level. Students go to class when they like their teacher, and when the content is relevant. The board asked how much co-curricular activities play into attendance. Mrs. Cook shared that she doesn't have data on it, but would tangentially think of it as belonging. Mr. Koch added that Oregon has always had a high absence rate, for some reason it is more acceptable to miss school in this state. Mrs. Cook reviewed the attendance distribution by grade level and shared their layered attendance strategies for this school year.

Ms. Farias reviewed data from the English Language Learners report and provided an overview of definitions for services including emergent, newcomer, monitor, and ever English learner. The district's population is very diverse with 67% speaking Spanish. Active English learners make up 23% and forever learners make up 1/3 of those that have been a part of the EML program. These students come with funding, and this is how teachers get paid to support this specific need for the program. That amount is not capped. Superintendent Klinger added that they also commit a lot from the general fund. Ms. Farias closed by sharing how they collaborate in everything they do, and have common strategies to support their dual identified students.

Closing Items

10. Debrief and Next Steps (3:15 - 3:30 p.m.) (3:40 p.m.)

Chair Petersen noted that they will follow up on getting the committees rolling, and it sounds like a lot of the follow up work will initially take place in the committees. He shared his appreciation for people's engagement.

11. Announcements (3:30 - 3:45 p.m.) (3:42 p.m.)

Chair Petersen noted that Director Coleman-Cox has a conflict with the current board meeting schedule they adopted. They are working on a strategy to shift their meetings to allow for as much timing as possible, while

recognizing that they had a full board and vote on the schedule at the meeting in July. Following this meeting, the board will meet with cabinet and new administrators at the Troutdale Food Carts for the Board Social.

September 3, 2025: Regular Board Business Meeting – 7 p.m.

Council Chambers

Public Safety and School Building

12. Adjournment (3:45 p.m.) (3:44 p.m.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:44 p.m.

Submitted by: _____

Sarah Avery

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and

Board of Directors