

1. Call to Order / Roll Check

Chair Dyson called the meeting to order and a roll check confirmed that all directors were present.

2. Land Acknowledgment

Chair Dyson read the Land Acknowledgment

3. Adoption or Adjustment of Agenda

Vice Chair Franko moved and Director Skuratowicz seconded the approval of the agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

4. District Staff Updates

4.A. Superintendent Update

Superintendent Hattrick reported that the high school held a successful lockdown drill that included first responders, including police and fire department representatives. He continues to work on the budget and his presentation planned for the November 21 board meeting. Board members were invited to schedule individual meetings with him for deeper briefing.

5. Board Policy Updates

5.A. EBC Emergency Plan and First Aid - NEW

EBCA Safety Threats - NEW

EBCB Emergency Procedure Drills and Instruction - REVISED

EBC/EBCA (old) Emergency Procedures and Disaster Plans – DELETE

Dr. Hattrick explained the rationale for separating the existing emergency procedures into separate policies. The new policy EBCB is focused on emergency procedure drills and instructions. Some drills are mandatory but among the optional topics was evacuation for wild fires. Director Skuratowicz asked if this might be a priority for Ashland, given our experiences with wild fire and evacuation challenges. Dr. Hattrick said that the school district works closely with emergency management officials in Ashland to review options for this.

There was a discussion about some conflicting expectations on fire drills between the fire and police departments. District Safety Coordinator Rebecca Bjornson explained that police are concerned about a bad actor pulling the fire alarm in order to get people into hallways where they become easy targets. This has happened in other locations. Police are advising a pause before automatic evacuation responding to a fire alarm. They encourage a quick check to confirm any indication of actual fire before evacuating, seeing either smoke or fire.

Fire department personnel believe that rapid evacuation in response to a fire alarm is the safest course of action for schools. Ms. Bjornson said that the district asks people to shelter in place

when they hear the fire alarm unless they perceive signs of smoke or flame, in which case they should rapidly evacuate.

The district emergency management personnel are staying in constant communication with first responders about this issue, as well as working to program newly installed fire suppression and alarm systems in buildings.

These policies will be brought forward for a formal “first read” at a future meeting.

5.B. JBA/GBN - Sexual Harassment – REVISED

Dr. Hattrick explained that revisions to these policies result from Oregon SB231, which established a new centralized reporting system including DHS and law enforcement that districts are required to use. It also reflects a change to the definition of sexual harassment to be “without consent” and clarifying what that means. There was a discussion about whether the district wished to evaluate complaints using a “preponderance of evidence” standard versus a “reasonable person” standard when conducting its investigations into complaints. The District will seek legal counsel on this question, as advised by OSBA. Director Skuratowicz recommended that we also ask SART to review the new policies.

There was a request to clarify the language in the sexual harassment policy regarding communicating with a third party's employer in the event of a complaint lodged against an employee. It is the Board's preference that any complaint lodged against an employee of an outside party result in immediate removal of that person from district property until the complaint is investigated and resolved. Director Skuratowicz said that our policies should make clear that any form of sexual conduct involving elementary grade children should be deemed “without consent.”

5.C. GBNAB/JHFE - Suspected Abuse of a Child Reporting Requirements – REVISED

Superintendent Hattrick said that these updates to the policy on reporting suspected abuse of a child include procedural changes and the requirement for employees to inform their supervisors. If the complaint involves a direct supervisor, then an employee should proceed up the chain of command to the next level.

Board members emphasized the importance of clear reporting procedures and the need for flexibility in reporting chains. The process for reporting up the chain of command should be specific and clear to all staff. Dr. Hattrick said that the district would draft administrative regulations for board review on the process. He also clarified that this policy does not supersede other mandated reporter responsibilities of both staff and board members, and emphasized the importance of internal reporting.

5.D. JGE Expulsion – REVISED

Dr. Hattrick explained the updates to the expulsion policy, including clarifying the board's delegation of authority to the superintendent to serve as the hearings officer. He outlined the process for appeals to the board and the need for a formal process for board deliberations.

Director Skuratowicz mentioned that the Board has an established format for hearing appeals and this would essentially be the same. There was a question about reasons for expulsion. Dr. Hatrick said that an incident posing a physical threat to anyone would be a clear reason. The second listed reason could result from a series of multiple violations that might fall short of an egregious incident, but would cumulatively call for taking the action to expel a student. There is also an option for declaring an expulsion that is held in abeyance as a “final warning” that one more infraction would trigger that expulsion.

Board members discussed the importance of clear procedures and the need for a unified approach across the district to ensure an equity treatment of students. Dr. Hatrick said that the board will receive the administrative regulations spelling out the process of implementation.

Action Items

- Reach out to the Sexual Assault Response Team to get their input on the sexual harassment policy revisions.
- Provide a response from legal counsel on the options for the "preponderance of evidence" or "reasonable person" standard in the sexual harassment policy.
- Clarify the language in the sexual harassment policy regarding communicating with a third party's employer.
- Revise the language in the suspected child abuse reporting policy to clarify the process for reporting up the chain of command if the immediate supervisor is the concern.
- Draft Administrative Regulations for all of the policies under consideration.

6. Other Items of Interest that Directors May Wish to Bring Forward

Vice Chair Franko announced that Sunstone Housing Collaborative is expected to release a Request for Proposals on November 6 soliciting partners for the next planning steps towards an affordable housing project. She expects that the school board will host a special session on Thursday, December 19, to report the Sunstone recommendation for contractors and other partners.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, Chair Dyson adjourned the meeting at 8:05 pm.

Submitted by:

Jackie Schad, Board Secretary

Dated for Board Approval: December 19, 2024

Board Chair Rebecca Dyson

Superintendent Joseph Hatrick