

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Check

Chair Dyson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and explained the purpose of the meeting and that no public comment would be taken. She stated that the meeting was being recorded and that the recording would be maintained as part of the public record.

Roll check confirmed that all five members were present: Directors Rooklyn, Ferguson, Ruby, Vice Chair Hatch, and Chair Dyson.

2. Adoption of Agenda

❖ **Motion:** Director Rooklyn moved, and Director Ruby seconded adoption of the agenda as presented.

Aye: Rooklyn, Ruby, Ferguson, Hatch, Dyson

Nay: none

Result: The motion carried by unanimous vote of the five members.

3. Open Hearing on Proposed Contract Non-renewal

The board held an open hearing at the request of probationary teacher David Garden to consider whether to uphold or overturn the administration's recommendation not to renew his contract for the 2026-27 school year. Chair Dyson read the preliminary hearing statements and outlined the hearing process.

Mr. Garden was given 15 minutes to present his case. He read a statement describing his commitment to collaboration, problem-solving, and filmmaking instruction, acknowledged prior conflicts and misunderstandings, and asked the board for the opportunity to learn, grow, and continue serving students.

The administrative team, led by Principal Atanes and Assistant Superintendent Cuddeback, was given 15 minutes to present its case in support of the nonrenewal recommendation. Assistant Superintendent Cuddeback provided an overview of the laws and regulations governing probationary and contract teachers and stated that the matter before the board concerned documented concerns related to Mr. Garden's professional conduct and his ability to accept and reflect on corrective feedback from supervisors.

Principal Atanes presented a timeline of documented incidents and communications from October and November of 2025 that support the recommendation for nonrenewal. He stated that the recommendation was based on concerns related to professionalism and responsiveness to supervisory feedback, including unprofessional tone with staff in front of students, escalation and deflection in written communication, introduction of unrelated grievances into supervisory discussions, inappropriate communication with parents and students, and failure to respond appropriately to feedback.

Superintendent Hattrick summarized his review of the recommendation and supporting materials. He stated that although Mr. Garden had submitted materials demonstrating strengths in several areas, those materials did not substantially address the concerns identified in the November 17 letter of expectation. He also referenced additional concerns that arose following the recommendation and stated that it remained his professional recommendation that the board uphold the recommendation for nonrenewal.

Mr. Garden was then given five minutes for rebuttal. Allison Orton, representing the Ashland Education Association, spoke on his behalf. She argued that there had not been sufficient follow-up after the letter of expectation, emphasized Mr. Garden's work ethic and contributions to students, and urged the board to allow him to continue teaching.

Board members asked clarifying questions of both parties regarding accountability, complaint procedures, communication with students, process, and use of the Danielson Framework for evaluating licensed staff.

4. ACTION ITEM: Consider Administration's Recommendation for Contract Non-renewal

Board members continued clarifying questions regarding testimony, communications, and incidents discussed during the hearing. The board reviewed statements, comments, and email communications submitted as part of the record for clarity and accuracy.

Board members emphasized that the hearing was not an evaluation of Mr. Garden's teaching ability, but rather a determination of whether the statutory standard had been met for nonrenewal of a probationary teacher's contract. Board members also acknowledged the difficulty of the decision and noted concern that there had been limited evidence of his accountability prior to the hearing.

❖ **Motion:** Vice Chair Hatch moved, and Director Ferguson seconded to uphold the administration's recommendation for nonrenewal of Mr. Garden's contract.

Aye: Dyson, Ferguson, Hatch, Rooklyn, Ruby

Nay: none

Result: The motion carried by unanimous vote of the five members.

5. KL Public Complaint Step 4 Appeal Consideration

The Board considered an appeal of the Superintendent's decision on a Level 3 complaint and determined whether to accept the appeal or uphold the Superintendent's findings.

6. Recess to Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(f) exempt public information and records.

Chair Dyson called for a motion to enter Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)(f) to consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

❖ **Motion:** Director Rooklyn moved, and Director Ruby seconded that we enter Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)(f) to consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

Aye: Dyson, Ferguson, Hatch, Rooklyn, Ruby

Nay: none

Result: The motion carried by unanimous vote of the five members.

Executive Session is closed to the public; no decisions will be made in executive session; any action will be taken in open session. The regular meeting recessed for executive session at 7:30 p.m.

7. Return to Open Session

Chair Dyson reconvened the meeting in open session at 7:52 p.m.

8. ACTION ITEM: Appeal Consideration

❖ **Motion:** Director Rooklyn moved, and Vice Chair Hatch seconded to not accept the appeal because the matter raised falls within the administrative purview of the Superintendent and district staff, and the board found that Policy KL was followed appropriately.

Aye: Dyson, Ferguson, Hatch, Rooklyn, Ruby

Nay: none

Result: The motion carried by unanimous vote of the five members.

Director Rooklyn emphasized that the board takes concerns raised by students and families seriously and encouraged the use of the complaint process outlined in Policy KL to address such matters.

9. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, Chair Dyson adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Submitted by:
Holly Rosser, Board Secretary

Date for Board Approval: April 9, 2026