

**GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10 JT.  
Minutes of Regular Board Business Meeting**

**\*\*DRAFT\*\***

**Wednesday, April 2, 2025**

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The Gresham-Barlow School District Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, April 2, 2025 in the council chambers of the Public Safety and Schools building, 1331 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, Oregon. A Zoom link was provided for virtual meeting attendance.

**Board Members present:**

Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

**Cabinet Members present:**

John Koch, Interim superintendent  
Dr. Tracy Klinger, Deputy Superintendent  
Dr. Angela Freeman, Assistant Superintendent  
Donna Ravenberg, Executive Director of Student Support Services  
Jeff Gibbs, Executive Director of Technology Services  
Athena Vadnais, Director of Communications and Community Engagement  
Dennis Clague, Director of Finance

**A. Opening Items**

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**Procedural: 1. Call Regular Business Meeting to Order and Pledge of Allegiance (7:06 p.m.)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by the board chair, Kris Howatt. Director Farrens led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Procedural: 2. Roll Call (7:06 p.m.)**

Director Gómez was absent from the meeting. Position 2, Zone 3 of the school board is currently vacant. A quorum of the board was in attendance.

**Action: 3. Approve Meeting Agenda (7:07 p.m.)**

**MOTION 81:** Move to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

Motion by Blake Petersen, second by David Ligatich.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

**Procedural: 4. Land Acknowledgement (7:08 p.m.)**

Chair Howatt read the Land Acknowledgement at the start of the meeting.

**B. Citizens' Requests of Board**

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**Procedural: 1. Guidelines for Public Comment (7:08 p.m.)**

Chair Howatt reviewed the guidelines for public comment. There were two public comments received before the start of the meeting. A written comment expressing concerns over the use of bond funds was submitted by a former teacher of the district, Bill Martin, and was included in the board agenda packet. He was not in attendance at the meeting to speak.

Jeremiah Hickman, a teacher and OST Coordinator at Dexter McCarty Middle School, expressed his hopes that the district can continue to offer middle school sports programs even with the budget concerns they are facing. He shared the positive impacts that learning a sport in a structured environment provides to students, especially those that can't afford to participate in club or other private sports programs.

Following the comments, Chair Howatt shared that they have their first budget meeting April 9th and the next meeting on April 23rd. The whole budget committee will be at those meetings, and this is where they would like to hear conversations on the importance of those types of things.

### C. Consent Agenda

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#### **Action (Consent), Minutes:**

1. Minutes from Regular Strategic Planning Session (Retreat) - February 28, 2025
2. Minutes from Supplemental Budget Hearing - March 5, 2025
3. Minutes from Regular Business Meeting - March 5, 2025
4. Minutes from Regular Work Session - March 12, 2025
5. Minutes from Budget 101 - March 19, 2025

#### **Action (Consent): 6. Monthly Financial Report as of 02/28/2025**

#### **Action (Consent): 7. Personnel Report: Employee Contracts (added 04/01/2025)**

#### **Action (Consent): 8. Policy Update**

#### **Action: 9. Approval of Consent Agenda (7:17 p.m.)**

**MOTION 82:** Move to approve the consent agenda.

Motion by Blake Petersen, second by Shawn Farrens.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

### D. Recognitions

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#### **Action, Recognitions: 1. Resolution: Volunteer Appreciation Week (7:18 p.m.)**

Chair Howatt led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing April 21-25, 2025 as Volunteer Appreciation Week this year. Following the motion, Director Petersen read the resolution for the record.

**MOTION 83:** Move to ratify the resolution recognizing April 21-25, 2025 as Volunteer Appreciation Week in the district.

Motion by Blake Petersen, second by Holly Riegelmann.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

#### **Action, Recognitions: 2. Resolution: Teacher Appreciation Week (7:20 p.m.)**

Chair Howatt led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing May 5-9, 2025 as Teacher Appreciation Week this year. Following the motion, Director Riegelmann read the resolution for the record.

**MOTION 84:** Move to ratify the resolution recognizing May 5-9, 2025 as Teacher Appreciation Week in the district.

Motion by Holly Riegelmann, second by David Ligatich.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

#### **Recognitions: 3. Swimming - Sam Barlow High School (7:22 p.m.)**

Principal Jason Bhear led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing Sam Barlow High School Swim Team athletes for their state level accomplishments. At the Mt. Hood Conference District Championship in February, Powell Jacob (Junior) was named district champion in the 200 Free and 500 Free. Coach Angela Miller was also named the Mt. Hood Conference Boys Swimming Coach of the Year.

#### **Recognitions: 4. Sam Barlow High School Wrestling (7:24 p.m.)**

Principal Bhear led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing Sam Barlow High School Wrestling athletes for their state level accomplishments. The Girls Wrestling Team had a strong season with five wrestlers qualifying for state. The team finished 2nd overall out of 25 teams at regionals. Taylor Ward, Freshman, 125lb girls took 1st in Special District Regionals and 3rd at State. Olivia Howell, Senior, 170lb girls took 1st in Special District Regionals.

The Boys Wrestling Team continued their improvement and finished second in the Mt. Hood Conference. They ended their season with four district champions. Gavin Jusino, Sophomore, 106lb boys earned 1st in Mt. Hood Conference Districts. Garrett Head, Senior, 120lb boys took 1st in Mt. Hood Conference Districts and earned 5th place at State. Olin Storlie, Freshman, 126lb boys took 1st in Mt. Hood Conference Districts and earned 5th place at State. Layth

Quochbane, Freshman, 165lb boys earned 1st in the Mt. Hood Conference Districts. Coach Rod Heiser was named Mt. Hood Conference Boys Wrestling Coach of the Year. The students were unable to attend the meeting for this recognition.

**Recognitions: 5. Sam Barlow High School Boys Basketball (7:26 p.m.)**

Principal Bhear led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing the Sam Barlow High School Boys Basketball Team for their state level accomplishments. The team finished 1st in league, were ranked #1 in the state, and won the 6A Boys Basketball State Championship. Seniors Jalen Atkins, Mason Bierbrauer, and Brayden Barron were all named to the 1st Team All-Mt. Hood Conference and All-Tournament First Team at State. Principal Bhear added that they just learned that afternoon that Coach Tom Johnson was named the Mt. Hood Conference Coach of the Year, and Jalen Atkins was named the Mt. Hood Conference Player of the Year.

**Recognitions: 6. Sam Barlow High School Soccer (7:29 p.m.)**

Principal Bhear led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing Sam Barlow High School Girls Soccer athletes for their state level accomplishments. Senior Katya Tercek was selected as 1st Team All-State. She was unable to attend the meeting for this recognition.

**Recognitions: 7. Sam Barlow High School Racquetball (7:30 p.m.)**

Principal Bhear led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing Sam Barlow High School Racquetball athletes for their state level accomplishments. The Racquetball Team competed at State, and Juniors Olivia Riggs and Ariana Campbell were selected for the All-State Team. They were unable to be at the meeting for this recognition.

**Recognitions: 8. Sam Barlow High School Dance Team (7:30 p.m.)**

Principal Bhear led the board, administration, and all those in attendance in recognizing the Sam Barlow High School Dance Team for their state level accomplishments. The team competed in the state championships and brought home a 3rd place trophy in the 6A Jazz division. Brooke Rinard was selected for the All-State Team and was awarded an academic scholarship.

**Recess/Reconvene**

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**Procedural: Board Recess (7:33 p.m.)**

The meeting was recessed at 7:33 p.m. and reconvened at 7:45 p.m.

**E. Gresham-Barlow Education Foundation Report**

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**Reports: 1. Update from the Foundation (7:45 p.m.)**

Cindy Mumford of the Gresham-Barlow Education Foundation was in attendance to provide an update on recent Foundation activities. She shared that Monday, August 18, 2025 will be the Foundation Golf Tournament this year, and added that it is still a fun event for non-golfers. They will have morning and afternoon start times again this year which has been very popular. They are working on a new website that will be a lot more user friendly, and will have online applications for teachers and classified staff to apply for grants. The applications will go directly to the principal of the staff member's school and to Dr. Klinger who helps review them. She shared that their favorite thing to do is give out grant funds, and they were able to grant \$3,350 to 4th Grade DLI Teacher Santiago Kis for a grow tower where students can grow their own lettuce. She encouraged everyone to apply for grants.

**F. Superintendent and District Leadership Report**

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**Information: 1. Update from the Superintendent and District Leadership (7:49 p.m.)**

Interim Superintendent Koch provided an update on meetings and activities he has participated in over the past month. He thanked Mr. Hickman for his comments and for coming with solutions, noting that it is a great way to advocate and work together. He shared that staff was sent a letter today updating them on where the district is at in the budgeting process. He provided an overview of the five foci they used in the budgeting process which included finding as many non-payroll reductions as possible, identifying reductions outside of the classroom, prioritizing safety and students who need the most support, ensuring the continued employment of permanent employees, and remaining committed to the long-term financial stability of the district.

He shared that school districts across the state are facing similar budget challenges, but fortunately Gresham-Barlow is in a more financially stable position than other places, but they are not immune. Costs for goods and services are expected to continue to rise, and student enrollment is expected to trend downward. There is uncertainty about future financial support at the federal level. Mr. Koch noted that it is imperative they find a balance between the district's immediate needs and positioning themselves to operate within their means, which requires them to continue to examine financial practices that build long-term financial resilience. He reviewed what they must do to achieve their goals of balancing the budget including investing in resources to support college and career development, planning for curriculum adoptions that meet state standards, ensuring staff have access to professional development that supports quality instruction, and continuing to work with community and government partners to help students access mental health support. He closed by sharing that the Gresham Community has a history of facing challenges together, and students will continue to be at the center of their decisions, and staff will continue to look for ways to innovate and improve.

## **G. Board Reports and Requests**

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### **Information: 1. Updates from Board Members (7:54 p.m.)**

Board members summarized various meetings and other activities they participated in during the past month. Topics included the following:

- Introducing the Dave Ramsey curriculum into the leadership class at CAL last year; speaking at CAL last week and seeing the curriculum in action.
- Attending the playoffs and state championship game for Barlow Basketball and having players sign a poster for their son.
- Watching JV baseball games on the new turf fields, and seeing all three Barlow teams practice on the turf even on the rainiest of days.
- Serving on the MESD Budget Committee and attending a meeting last night with another scheduled for next week.
- Spending time in Salem lobbying; SB 936, which would have allowed the City of Portland to work around the land use process for the water filtration plant, has died.
- Recognizing the process and the time it takes for the students to come and be recognized by the board, and recognizing the excellence coming from the students and seeing what makes them passionate.
- Thanking Mr. Hickman for his comments and noting how universal that support of middle school sports was to the board.
- Attending the School Improvement Plan session held at Gordon Russell Middle School where each board member was assigned to groups and hear an overview from the schools; they expressed appreciation of the time and effort that went into that.
- Going to a school board training conference over the weekend.

## **H. Presentations**

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### **Reports: 1. Gresham Arthur Academy Public Charter School Annual Report (8:05 p.m.)**

Dr. Klinger reviewed information included in the board agenda packet, and introduced representatives from Gresham Arthur Academy (GAA) to provide their annual report to the board. Representatives included Principal Kandice Burton and Executive Director Stephani Walker. Ms. Burton shared information about them noting that they use a unique method called Direct Instruction to teach essential subjects like reading, math, and language. She reviewed their mission and core values, noting that they want to be a place where students, staff, and families are valued. The GAA difference is their instructional model, but also their community. They do project learning in groups for things like social studies and science. They have one class per grade, and families get to know each other really well through the small community and their active parent organization. Students know each other across grades too with buddy days each month.

Ms. Burton reviewed their enrollment noting that they have a max enrollment of 30 students per class. They have several students that come in at the 3rd or 4th grade level, and typically students come to them behind grade level. They currently have 99 students on the waitlist, and as of that morning they have 175 applications. Ms. Burton noted that they have limited space and staff. Their current enrollment includes 18 out-of-district students with 7 new this year. This includes 9 students who were originally in Gresham-Barlow but have moved out of the district. She reviewed data for the percentage of students passing by grade in the state ELA and math assessments, and noted that it is always interesting to compare the data because they have small classes.

Ms. Burton shared information on their three main focus areas which include attendance, SpEd collaboration, and

funding. Attendance has been a focus for the past two years because they can't teach students that aren't in seats. They have encouraged attendance by having surprise national days such as popcorn & potato chip day. Today was national children's picture book day. They have also increased communication around the importance of attendance and lightened the absentee workload on teachers. Last year their regular attenders percentage increased by 14.5% to 85.5%. Their current regular attenders percentage is at 91%, which is much closer to pre-covid numbers. In their SpEd collaboration, they have been holding monthly meetings with Donna Ravenberg and her team. They also had an alignment meeting with Gresham-Barlow program leaders and the GAA admin team. They are working on having a behavior meeting to see what it looks like when they submit a referral and determine what they are looking for.

Ms. Burton shared information around funding, noting that this has been a huge area for them. They are proud of what they are able to accomplish on such a small budget. Currently, their funding sources are incredibly limited. They get 80% pass-through of state funds, along with SIA grant funds, and early literacy grant funds. They don't get access to facilities funding which is 10%, or transportation funding for field trips. Staffing is 76% of their budget. A recent study found that over the last ten years, funding for charter schools dropped to 48% of their district-run counterparts from 63% in 2013. She reminded the board that GAA previously sent a letter to the board requesting to increase their pass-through funds to 90%, and added that they would also be happy to do an incremental increase like 85% next year, and 90% the year after. They would also like to request access to transportation funding for field trips. She noted that they wouldn't be able to attend the budget meeting, but they would look into submitting written testimony to the budget committee. She noted that not all districts do a flat rate for all of their charter schools.

Following the presentation, there was time for question from the board. Board members expressed appreciation for the 18-year partnership with GAA noting that a lot of students have come through their program able to read and write who may not have otherwise been able to. In regards to the transportation funding, the board asked if GAA has done research to see if charter school field trips are reimbursable. Ms. Burton shared that they can't get reimbursed as a charter school, but they can through the district. They were talking with the district about possibly accessing those rates. The board asked for clarification on attendance and if GAA knew the attendance rate for kindergarteners. Ms. Burton shared that she didn't have that information with her, but she would send it to the board after the meeting. Board members noted that district attendance tends to be lower for kindergarten, and they were curious how the program connects that. The board also asked about those applying to the program, and how much people know about direct instruction when they apply. Ms. Burton shared that they have been much more intentional the last few years in sharing about how their program works. The only reason they have students coming in at the upper grades is because other students are leaving. Some leave because it is not what they thought it would be. They have preview nights showing videos and examples of what direct instruction looks like. For the majority of students when they are selecting how they heard of GAA, it is from friends, family, or an internet search. Chair Howatt encouraged board members to visit if they haven't to see how it works. The board asked if GAA participates in standard testing metrics related to reading skills, and GAA confirmed that they do the Oregon State testing. The board asked if they also use metrics through DIBELS or STAR. Ms. Burton shared that they use Easy CBM for all grades.

## **I. Recess/Reconvene**

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### **Procedural: 1. Board Recess (8:22 p.m.)**

The board took a recess earlier in the meeting. They did not take a recess at this time.

## **J. Committee Meeting Minutes and/or Reports**

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### **Minutes: 1. Board Goals Committee Minutes, February 21, 2025 (8:22 p.m.)**

The minutes of the Board Goals Committee Meeting on February 21, 2025 were provided for the board to review. There was no discussion of this agenda item.

### **Minutes: 2. District Equity Committee (DEC) Meeting Minutes, March 20, 2025 (added 04/01/25) (8:22 p.m.)**

The minutes of the District Equity Committee Meeting on March 20, 2025 were provided for the board to review. There was no discussion of this agenda item.

## **K. Associations Reports**

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**Information: 1. Gresham-Barlow Education Association (GBEA) (2 minutes) (8:23 p.m.)**

Matt Wallace, a teacher at East Gresham Elementary School, was in attendance to report on behalf of the Gresham-Barlow Education Association (GBEA) employees. He began by providing an update on how the Oregon Battle of the Books (OBOB) went. They had 16 schools from four school districts in the region come to East Gresham on March 15th to compete. Students have to read 16 books and then quiz one another. They had three teams this year from Kelly Creek, Hogan Cedars, and East Gresham. Several district level coaches volunteered to be moderators for the battles, and came in on a Saturday to moderate these battles. Mr. Wallace especially thanked district librarian Thomas Moll and coach Jessica Mihm for the countless hours they spent helping with this, as well as custodian Cris Cristurean who came in to help with custodial on Saturday. They leaned into the foundation to purchase sets of books for the battle, and they will look at doing that again next year to support getting books for more of the schools.

Mr. Wallace noted that they are living in challenging times, and that it is critical they support public education not just with voices, but with their actions. Students becoming informed, individual thinkers is essential to their success. They have to use their collective voices to ensure students don't lose theirs. The lack of stable and adequate funding for schools makes this task increasingly difficult. He noted that they have pressing questions, and they look forward to meeting with the district leadership. They hope they can stand together, GBEA, OSEA, the school board, and administrators to uphold and make sure every student can be their authentic selves and thrive wherever their path leads them.

**Information: 2. Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) (2 minutes) (8:29 p.m.)**

Tia Ross, an elementary secretary at East Orient Elementary School, was in attendance to report on behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Chapter 8 employees. She did not provide a report at the meeting.

**L. Action Items**

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**Action: 1. 2024-25 Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Seismic Assessment Grant (8:29 p.m.)**

Mr. Clague reviewed information included in the board agenda packet noting that they identified West Gresham for this, potentially for the roof. The identified funding would be to work with a local architecture firm to provide an application for the seismic grant, which would renovate the seismic stability of the building. Board members asked if this grant required a match, and Mr. Clague confirmed that it does not. The board also asked if the grant would allow them to do upgrades to ADA requirements or other things in the building. Mr. Clague noted that they could if the upgrades are tied to seismic retrofitting. The board asked if the \$25,000 amount was enough for an architecture firm to do this work, or if it will cost more. Mr. Clague noted that some firms can do it, and it generally costs around \$25,000 to have the firm evaluate the structure. They can provide some of the work that was looked at during the bond to the architectural firm to use as a base.

**MOTION 85:** Move to accept the Technical Assistant Program (TAP) Seismic Assessment grant for West Gresham Elementary School for \$25,000.

Motion by Blake Petersen, second by Shawn Farrens.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

**Action: 2. Integrated Grants Renewal (8:34 p.m.)**

Dr. Klinger shared that they are in the process of renewing the Integrated Grants, and the next step is for the board to approve the grant application. They had an extensive review of the grant in March, and she didn't receive any additional questions from the board. They are looking for approval to submit the grant, then there will be more follow-up with the board for the Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets (LPGT). A new goal around early literacy was added to the application which is new from the last time they submitted for the grant.

**MOTION 86:** Move to approve the Integrated Grants Renewal application for the Gresham-Barlow School District.

Motion by Holly Riegelmann, second by Blake Petersen.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

Following the motion, board members asked if there would be a reason to not have the grant approval public. Dr. Klinger clarified that it is required to have it posted to the website, and they can add the presentation from the March work session as well.

**Action: 3. School Year Calendars 2025-2028 (8:37 p.m.)**

Mr. Koch shared that annually they adopt calendars for three years in order to help families with planning. The calendars can be amended over time. A question came up around Juneteenth for the 2026-27 school year calendar.

The holiday falls on Saturday in 2027 and is recognized on the Friday, with another school day the next Monday. They will need to talk this through with the labor associations to see if changes can be made to the calendar. Board members asked if they should pull the 2026-27 calendar until they talk to the labor groups. Mr. Koch shared that the board can approve all the calendars since it will come back to them for approval again next year.

**MOTION 87:** Move to approve the 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-2028 school year calendars as presented.  
Motion by Blake Petersen, second by David Ligatich.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carries  
Aye: Blake Petersen, David Ligatich, Holly Riegelmann, Kris Howatt, Shawn Farrens

## M. Information Items

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### **Information: 1. Monthly Financial Report as of 02/28/2025** (8:40 p.m.)

Mr. Clague reviewed information included in the board agenda packet and addressed a question that came up during a board member's review. He shared that some lines show a negative line in the budget, predominately in transportation and charter schools. The transportation rate is accelerating quicker than anticipated, and they will likely bring a budget adjustment to the board in June. The negative line for charter schools is due to more enrollment in MEWA and a change in calculation by the state. They will look at adjusting those and they should be able to offset that. Board members asked for clarification on supplemental action and if the budget that will be presented to them assumes future board action on the supplemental budget. Mr. Clague clarified that the budget they are presenting includes adjustments for those two areas of transportation and charter schools.

## N. Closing Items

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### **Information: 1. Announcements** (8:44 p.m.)

Chair Howatt reviewed the announcements included in the board agenda packet. A Zoom link for virtual meeting attendance will be provided for upcoming meetings.

April 9, 2025: Budget Committee Meeting - 7 p.m.  
Partnership Room  
Center for Advanced Learning

April 16, 2025: Board Work Session - 6 p.m.  
Partnership Room  
Center for Advanced Learning

April 23, 2025: Budget Committee Meeting - 7 p.m.  
Partnership Room  
Center for Advanced Learning

May 7, 2025: Regular Board Business Meeting - 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers  
Public Safety and Schools Building

### **Procedural: 2. Adjournment**(8:45 p.m.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 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