



## Work Session of the Board of Education

Thursday, May 8, 2025 5:30 PM

Oakdale Middle School Room 230  
815 S. Oakdale Ave.  
Medford, OR 97501

Michelle Atkinson: Present  
Lilia Caballero: Present  
Kendell Ferguson: Present  
Jeff Kinsella: Absent  
Suzanne Messer: Present  
Michael Williams: Present  
Cynthia Wright: Present

*A video recording of the Board meeting can be found on the district website at [this link](#). The slide presentation can be viewed by clicking on Extras listed next to the meeting at [this link](#).*

### 1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call

Board Chair Cynthia Wright called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was noted.

Chair Wright welcomed the public and stated the district's vision statement.

### 2. Agenda Adjustments and Approval

**Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved by unanimous consent.**

### 3. Recognitions

#### 3.a. Valedictorians

Innovation Academy and Innovation Online Academy Principal Cass Thonstad, North Medford High School Principal Allen Barber, and South Medford High School Principal Jonathan Lyons introduced the valedictorians and salutatorians for the class of 2025. Students shared college and/or career plans following graduation. Board members were formally invited to the graduation commencements.

The meeting was briefly recessed to take photos with those recognized.

### **3.b. Teacher Appreciation**

Superintendent Bret Champion introduced MEA President Jessica Fitzsimmons and Vice President Lisa North and spoke regarding teachers centering themselves around students and knowing every student by name, strength, and need and doing something about it. Fitzsimmons shared memories as a student when education was simplified and went on to share that regardless of the way things have changed, the focus remains the same with relationships, growth, and hope.

Board Directors expressed appreciation for Medford School District teachers.

## **4. Recess**

*The recess took place earlier following the recognition of valedictorians.*

## **5. Public Hearing for the FY2025-26 Budget**

Chair Wright opened the public hearing for the FY2025-26 Budget.

Public Input: No comments were made. Chair Wright closed the public hearing.

## **6. Work Session Items**

### **6.a. Coherency in Action: A Community Share-Out**

Chair Wright recognized former Board members Jim Horner, Tod Hunt, and Karen Starchvick involved in the 2020 Strategic Planning effort and explained the report reflects district work since then. Superintendent Champion described the Strategic Planning Team—70 educators, parents, students, and community members—who developed a plan based on the principle that "ALL are learning and learning is for ALL." The team focused on four key themes: Nurturing and Growing Potential, Engaging in Hands-on Learning, Harmonizing Community, and Upstreaming Resources.

Superintendent Champion invited South Medford High School Assistant Principal Doug Buttorff, Social Emotional Learning Advocate April Pacheco, Jacksonville Elementary Assistant Principal Shawna Smith, Executive Director, Oregon Center for Creative Learning & The Children's Museum of Southern Oregon/The Ivy School Sunny Spicer, and Abraham Lincoln Elementary Teachers Jennifer Sweet & Amanda Artale to the presentation table to present on initiatives such as Graduation-on-Track Systems, Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS), ABLE Leadership, Preschool Expansion, and Curriculum Development.

Board members praised their dedication to student success.

The Board Chair paused the meeting for a short recess.

#### **6.b. NMHS Gymnasium Update - Engineer Outbrief**

Superintendent Champion introduced Katie Ritenour of KPFF Consulting Engineers, who presented a report on the NMHS gym roof collapse. She reviewed her qualifications and provided an overview of KPFF's role and scope, the existing gym building, collapse timeline, and contributing factors.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding the investigation's thoroughness, the potential for predicting such failures, and the structural glulam beams.

After the report, Board Director Michael Williams requested an opportunity to comment on Teacher Appreciation, suggesting funds or stipends for classroom supplies due to out-of-pocket teacher spending. He also raised concerns about the professional development budget.

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Brad Earl responded, explaining that classroom supplies are budgeted and available through principals, and the professional development increase supports new curriculum rollout.

Vice Chair Kendell Ferguson noted receiving notification of free supplies for her students attending elementary school. Superintendent Champion acknowledged teachers' dedication.

#### **6.c. Board Member Resignation and Next Steps**

Chair Wright announced Board Director Michelle Atkinson's resignation effective June 1, 2025, and thanked her for two years of service. Director Atkinson cited a family relocation and encouraged continued collaboration among the Board.

The Board discussed the vacancy process. Board Director Lilia Caballero proposed a timeline for applications, interviews, and swearing in a new member by June 5. Discussion included developing application questions, using another district's application as a model, revising Policy BBE, and possibly delaying the appointment until after the May 20 election.

**MOTION: A motion to approve the proposed timeline for filling the vacancy on the Board included: submit application questions (maximum 5 each) to Jodi by 12:00 pm on May 13; application goes live by 5:00 pm on May 15; applications are due by 5:00 pm on May 22; Board member individual ranking of applicant answers due by 5:00 pm on May 27; interview top three ranked applicants on May 29 or May 30; and swear in new member at the June 5 currently**

**scheduled Board work session. This motion was made by Lilia Caballero and seconded by Suzanne Messer.**

**Roll call vote:**

**Ferguson: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Messer: Yea, Williams: Yea, Atkinson: Yea, Wright: Abstain** *(Due to conflict with candidacy for School Board election.)*

**Yea: 5, Abstain: 1, Absent: 1**

**Motion carried.**

Following the approval of the motion, it was determined that Board Directors Kendell Ferguson, Suzanne Messer, and Lilia Caballero would meet on May 14 to finalize the application questions.

#### **6.d. School Board Policies - *first reading***

Board Directors reviewed the policy and determined to move it forward for a second reading and approval at the May 22 Board meeting.

### **7. Consent Agenda**

#### **7.a. Staff Assignment Report**

#### **7.b. Minutes from previous Board meetings**

**Hearing no objections, the consent agenda was approved by unanimous consent.**

### **8. Announcements**

#### **8.a. May 22 - Board Meeting at Oakdale Middle School - 5:30 PM**

Chair Wright acknowledged the Board meeting on May 22 at Oakdale Middle School.

### **9. Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.

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Chair of the District School Board  
Medford School District

ATTEST:

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Superintendent-Clerk

DRAFT