

Board Policy Committee

Thursday, January 8, 2026

2022-2028
Agency Goals

#1 – Creating a high quality learning experience for all

#2 – Operationalizing systems that engage and empower communities

#3 – Building a culturally Responsive workforce

MESD Board Equity Lens- <https://www.multnomahesd.org/board-equity.html>

The meeting was called to order at 12:09 p.m. Thursday, January 8, 2026 by Committee Chair Renee Anderson.

- **CALL TO ORDER**

Present: Renee Anderson, Committee Chair
Denyse Peterson, Board member

Absent: Amanda Squiemphen-Yazzie, Board member

Administration: Sascha Perrins, Assistant Superintendent
Heather Severns, Board Secretary

Guests: None

1. Review of Policies for Discussion

The group confirmed there were **two policies** scheduled for review:

- A **Board-requested policy** regarding **BBDD-Board Attendance** (not currently scheduled for update, but requested for review/discussion).
- A **staff-initiated policy: Policy KK – Visitors to MESD Facilities and MESD Occupied Facilities**.

2. Policy Review: Board Attendance Policy (Alignment with ORS/OSBA)

Discussion highlights:

- A concern raised at a prior board meeting was that MESD's policy did not align with OSBA language and/or the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS).

- Clarification was provided that OSBA guidance **interprets the law**; MESD policy must be consistent with **ORS**, which is the controlling authority.
- It was noted there are **similar but distinct ORS references** for school districts versus ESDs; the group discussed that the policy may have referenced the **incorrect ORS** (school district version), though the two statutes are nearly identical in language.

Board concerns previously noted (as referenced in meeting):

- Definitions and interpretation of “ceasing to discharge the duties of office”
- Distinction between **excused vs. unexcused absences**
- Importance of **communication** in determining whether absences meet statutory expectations
- Differences in **threshold descriptions** (e.g., “two consecutive months” vs. “one-fifth of meetings”)
- Ensuring representation for the community and elected board positions

Threshold clarification (meeting count):

- The group discussed typical annual meeting counts and how a “one-fifth” threshold may translate into a practical number of unexcused absences (approximately **3 meetings** in a 14-meeting year, depending on inclusion of retreat/work session and budget meeting).

Process review and compliance:

- The group discussed an instance where a board member exceeded the allowable number of **unexcused absences**, and confirmed:
 - The **Chair and Vice Chair raised the issue** as required.
 - No recommendation for action was made.
 - No formal board action was taken.
 - This sequence was consistent with MESD policy requirements and aligned with ORS intent.

Possible policy change (discussion only):

- If the Board preferred stricter alignment to ORS language, the policy could be revised to reference “**two consecutive months**”; however, the group noted that a “one-fifth of meetings” threshold may better address patterns such as missing every other month.

Outcome/Decision:

- The group agreed the **current attendance policy does not require changes** at this time and does **not need to be taken back to the Board** for revision based on this review.
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3. Related Document Review: Board Member Agreement (Mentorship/Attendance Expectations)

The group reviewed a **signed agreement** connected to meeting attendance expectations and mentorship requirements.

Key points discussed:

- The agreement states that if meeting attendance/mentor expectations are not met, the matter **will be brought to the full Board for consideration**, and the Board **may vote** on whether to vacate the seat in accordance with policy.
- The agreement remains in effect unless amended or terminated by the Board.
- The agreement does **not require** the Board to re-raise the issue or to vote; it allows discretion.
- Discussion included concerns about the board member's lack of communication regarding absences, balanced with contextual factors.

Mentor role discussion:

- Questions were raised about mentorship follow-through and whether mentor/mentee meetings occurred.

Potential follow-up (suggestion):

- It was suggested that the agreement be **sent as a reminder** to the board member.
- It was also agreed that this reminder should **come from Board leadership (Chair/Vice Chair or Board member)** rather than staff.

4. Policy Review: Policy KK – Visitors to MESD Facilities and MESD Occupied Facilities

Heather Severns introduced a revised draft of **Policy KK**, described as a staff-initiated update originating from on-site staff leadership (Helen's View), and aligned with prior language and practices from other districts (including Reynolds).

Discussion highlights:

- The intent of the policy is to continue welcoming visitors while making expectations more **clear, specific, and safety-focused** in response to changing conditions.
- Emphasis was placed on:
 - **Mandatory check-in**
 - Administrator **discretion** to approve, restrict, or guide visits
 - Safety/security needs across programs with heightened confidentiality concerns
 - Clarifying that the policy is not intended to restrict **families** in ordinary contexts

Equity lens:

- Confirmation was provided that the equity lens review was included/attached in the board materials.

Clarification of “observational visits”:

- The group discussed who may fall under “observational visits,” including:
 - Board tours
 - Student teachers / licensure program participants
 - Other education program observers
- It was noted that such visits may require **background checks** and must be approved/managed to avoid disruption and protect student confidentiality.

Outcome/Decision:

- The group expressed support for the updated Policy KK.
- It was agreed the policy could move forward through the Board **Consent Agenda** (as an update to an existing policy), with the understanding that any board member may request it be pulled from consent for discussion.

Action item:

- Heather Severns will **add Policy KK to the agenda for the 20th** (month/date to be inserted).

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Severns
Executive Assistant/Board Secretary