

Work Session
Thursday, October 3, 2024 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: Present
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: <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/msbm> and the slide presentation can be viewed at this link: <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Meeting/Supplementals/1545?meeting=656181>

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 called.

Chair Wright welcomed the public, stated the district's vision statement, and read the public meeting civility standards for Medford School District (MSD) Board meetings.

2. Agenda Adjustments and Approval

MOTION: I move to add an agenda item after School Board Policies to discuss the schedule conflict with the November 7th Work Session and the OSBA Conference. This motion, made by Cynthia Wright and seconded by Suzanne Messer, Passed.

Roll call vote:

Kinsella: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Messer: Yea, Atkinson: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Wright: Yea, Williams: Absent (not present for this vote)

**Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1
Motion carried.**

3. Recognitions

3.a. National Merit Scholars

Superintendent Bret Champion spoke regarding the criteria to meet the National Merit Scholarship Semi-finalist Award and National Merit Commended Scholar. He introduced North Medford High School (NMHS) Principal Allen Barber and South Medford High School (SMHS) Assistant Principal Doug Buttorff. Both spoke regarding the accomplishments of the students and presented the semi-finalists and commended

scholars with certificates of recognition. Students shared their post high school/college plans.

4. Recess

The meeting was briefly recessed in order to take pictures with those recognized.

5. Work Session Items / Board Action Items

5.a. Complaints against Board Members

Attorney Thad Pauck joined the Board at the table.

Chair Wright explained a formal complaint was received from Paul Cynar against Board Director Jeff Kinsella at the September 19 Board Meeting. Chair Wright read the formal complaint and asked if anyone had any reason why the allegations in the complaint should not be investigated.

Chair Kinsella read an explanatory statement in response to the complaint.

Attorney Pauck reviewed the complaint process in Policy KL – Public Complaints. He recognized that Director Kinsella acknowledged the statements were made, and went on to explain the legal criteria for a defamation claim of a group of people as opposed to an individual person. He concluded that, in his opinion, the statement was not defamatory and was subject to absolute privilege provided to officers of a public body made in the course of deliberating. Pauck also pointed out that the claim of a hostile work environment would need to include a protected class and be pervasive and severe to meet the definition.

A question was raised regarding the potential cost of an investigation.

MOTION: I move that the complaint against Board member Kinsella be dismissed and that, pursuant to Policy KL, the Board's legal counsel prepare a final written decision addressing each allegation in the complaint and the reasons for dismissal. This motion was made by Suzanne Messer and seconded by Cynthia Wright.

Roll call vote:

Messer: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Atkinson: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Kinsella: Abstain (with conflict), Wright: Yea, Williams: Absent (not present for this vote)

Yea: (5), Nay: (0), Abstain (with conflict): (1), Absent: (1)

Motion carried.

Chair Wright stated Board Vice Chair Kendell Ferguson would lead the next portion of the meeting since the complaint being addressed was against herself.

Vice Chair Ferguson explained a formal complaint was received from Paul Cynar against Board Chair Wright at the September 19 Board Meeting. Vice Chair Ferguson read the formal complaint and an email sent to Cynar from Board Chair Wright on September 11.

She asked if anyone had a reason for the complaint to not be investigated. Chair Wright followed with an explanatory statement in response to the complaint and the follow-up correspondence between herself and Cynar.

Attorney Pauck explained the complaint included two separate events; the August 30 Board Retreat, and correspondence between Chair Wright and Cynar. He addressed the August 30 meeting first noting the statements made by Chair Wright did not reference a person or teachers specifically and therefore did not seem to have a basis for defamation. He added the statements were subject to absolute privilege provided to officers of a public body made in the course of deliberating, and referenced the recording of the meeting to back up Wright's statement.

Attorney Pauck addressed the second part of the complaint that included email and phone communications between Chair Wright and Cynar and read email correspondence from September 11. He concluded that, in his opinion, the email communication did not violate the standards in Board Policy BBF – Board Member Standards of Conduct and therefore recommended the complaint be dismissed without investigation or further action.

MOTION: I move that the complaint against Board Chair Wright be dismissed and that, pursuant to Policy KL, the Board's legal counsel prepare a final written decision addressing each allegation in the complaint and the reasons for dismissal. This motion was made by Suzanne Messer and seconded by Jeff Kinsella.

Roll call vote:

Kinsella: Yea, Messer: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Atkinson: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Wright: Abstain (with conflict); Williams: Absent (not present for this vote)

**Yea: (5), Nay: (0), Abstain (with conflict): (1), Absent: (1)
Motion carried.**

5.b. Cell Phones in our Secondary Schools

Superintendent Champion introduced the topic and acknowledged the Board's request to hear about cell phone use from secondary school principals. He turned the presentation over to Principal Charity McLeod, McLoughlin Middle School, Principal Lori Higgins, Hedrick Middle School, Principal Karina Rizo, Oakdale Middle School, Principal Ryan King, Ruch Outdoor Community School, Principal Cass Thonstad, Innovation Academy, and Principal Allen Barber, North Medford High School.

The principals shared student cell phone procedures, as outlined in the Secondary School Procedures document provided in the Board packet. They provided information on what is going well and what could be improved. Middle School principals shared how "Away for the Day" works at the middle school level, and high school principals shared procedures at their respective schools.

Director Michael Williams arrived at 6:31 PM (during Principal Cass Thonstad's presentation).

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding locker room policies; examples of approved cell phone use in the classroom; potential for high schools adopting the middle school procedures; improved socialization during lunch without cell phones; appreciation for use of cell phones for students with medical needs; parent support; consequences for students not following procedures; bullying/cyberbullying data (notice an increase or decrease in behavior); cell phones and the effects on student mental health; and consistency of enforcing the procedures (e.g. substitutes).

The Board took a break at 7:00 PM. Chair Wright exited the meeting and Vice Chair Ferguson assumed the chair role for the remainder of the meeting.

The meeting resumed at 7:04 PM.

5.c. New Graduation Credit Requirements

Deputy Superintendent Jeanne Grazioli introduced Career Learning Coordinator Larina Warnock and Curriculum Coordinator Jen Mason.

Mason explained that Senate Bill 513 requires all high school students to earn 0.5 credit in Civics education, beginning with the class of 2026. She shared the process taking place to implement the course within the Social Science curriculum and meet the standards.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding a requirement for contemporary issues class, and if students receive a letter grade or pass/fail.

Warnock explained the Senate Bill 3 diploma requirements beginning with the class of 2027 which will include a 0.5 credit in Personal Finance and 0.5 credit in Higher Education and Career Path Skills. It was noted that a request for approval to apply for a one-year waiver for the Personal Finance requirement would be presented to the Board at the next meeting, allowing staff time to select instructional materials and shift personal finance courses from elective to required in all MSD high schools.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding the learning platform – Major Clarity; parent communication when students are not on track to graduate; proactive counselors at NMHS; questioned if the curriculum would be the same at all high schools; requested to view the standards for Personal Finance; and which grade level Personal Finance would be offered/available.

5.d. Enrollment / Class Size Report

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Brad Earl provided an enrollment update, comparing the current enrollment with fall 2023 enrollment. He explained the average daily member (ADM) and average daily membership weighted (ADMw) funding and how it is determined by the state. Earl noted the Board will see a budget amendment in November or December reflective of the funding once the state reviews the statewide data.

Superintendent Champion spoke regarding the marketing around the district schools of choice, which resulted in additional students at Ruch Outdoor Community School and

Innovation Academy (IA). Earl shared the district had added a bus that transports student to Ruch.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding data for additional students attending IA and if they came from schools outside or within the district; and decisions involved in determining split classes (in elementary schools), including which teachers are placed in splits, and if there is modeling.

Grazioli directed attention to the elementary class size data for grades K-5. She spoke regarding split classes, and pointed out classes that were approaching or at the threshold, or above the threshold. She went on to summarize the middle school and high school class summary reports, noting the few areas that were over 180 students. She shared possible solutions that were being explored to alleviate the higher class sizes and caseloads.

Board Directors put forth questions and comments regarding data on special education/Maps and Focus classes; and number of students per school required to break even.

5.e. School Board Policies - *first reading*

Board Directors reviewed the policies and administrative regulations and determined the policies would move forward for a second reading and approval at the October 17 Board meeting.

5.f. Schedule Conflict with the November 7th Work Session and the OSBA Conference

MOTION: I move we cancel the November 7th meeting and move the agenda items to the November 21st meeting due to the conflict with the OSBA state conference. This motion was made by Suzanne Messer and seconded by Jeff Kinsella.

Roll call vote:

Williams: Yea, Kinsella: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Messer: Yea, Atkinson: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Wright: Absent (not present for this vote)

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: (1)

Motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda

6.a. Staff Assignment Report

6.b. Minutes from previous Board meetings

Champion directed attention to the updated staff assignment report.

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

7. Announcements

7.a. October 17, 2024 - Board Meeting at 5:30 PM - Oakdale Middle School

Vice Chair Ferguson noted the next Board meeting scheduled for October 17 at Oakdale Middle School.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Chair of the District School Board
Medford School District 549C

ATTEST:

Superintendent-Clerk

DRAFT