GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10 JT.
Minutes of Special Board Work Session

Thursday, February 12, 2026

The Gresham-Barlow School District Board of Directors held a special work session on Thursday, February 12, 2026 in the large conference room of the Public Safety and Schools Building, 1331 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, OR. A Zoom link was provided for virtual meeting attendance.

Board Members present:
Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens, Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann.

Cabinet Members present:
Dr. Tracy Klinger, Superintendent

Opening Items

1. **Call to Order** (5:33 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by the board chair, Blake Petersen.

2. **Roll Call** (5:33 p.m.)

All members of the board were in attendance at the meeting. Position 7 of the school board is currently vacant.

3. **Approve Meeting Agenda** (5:33 p.m.)

MOTION 62: Move to approve the meeting agenda as presented. This motion, made by Kris Howatt and seconded by Holly Riegelmann, Carried.
Aye: Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens, Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann
Aye: 6, No: 0

Board Candidate Interviews

4. **Candidate Interview Schedule** (5:33 p.m.)

Chair Petersen shared the agenda for the evening noting that they will interview board candidates and then explain the superintendent evaluation process. He reviewed the interview process by going over the interview question sheet and candidate list. They will interview three candidates during the meeting. The fourth candidate is out of the country and couldn't join virtually due to connectivity issues. The candidate is going to attempt to put together a video response, and ideally, they will review his responses as a board individually prior to 20th or at worst together on the 20th during their meeting. That will give them four candidates to consider.

Chair Petersen noted that they will use a similar adapted technique that they used for the superintendent hiring to help build consensus along the way while also having an equitable voice in the process. Board members were provided sheets to take notes on each candidate. They reviewed the evaluation matrix and noted that after the first interview they will have nothing to do because it is a comparison tool. They will look holistically between candidate 1 and 2 and decide which they prefer. After the third interview they will compare candidate 3 to candidate 1 and 2 in a head to head comparison. Chair Petersen reminded the board that they are not going to have discussion about the candidates tonight. At the end of the interviews, they will turn their score sheets into the board secretary who will keep them until the 20th when they evaluate the 4th candidate. They plan to appoint the new board member at the March 5th Business Meeting.

DRAFT

Chair Petersen shared that their first interview will be at 6:00 p.m. Each candidate will have 20 minutes to respond to the questions that were prepared. When that candidate arrives he will give them the expectations, then start with each person asking a question. Superintendent Klinger will be the time keeper to maintain the 20 minute interview time. Board members reviewed the questions and assigned who would ask which question.

Recess / Reconvene

Board Recess (5:48 p.m.)
The meeting was recessed at 5:48 p.m. and reconvened at 5:55 p.m.

Board Candidate Interviews (cont.)

At the start of each interview Chair Petersen shared the process with the candidates, and noted that they intend to work to an appointment by March 5th. Candidates were each asked 6 questions and given 20 minutes for responses. If they had additional time left after answering the questions, they were asked if they wanted to clarify or add to any of their responses, and if they had any questions for the board. The interview questions were as follows:

- Question 1: Tell us about yourself, your connection to this community, and why you are best qualified to serve Gresham-Barlow students and families.
- Question 2: What builds transparency between a school board and the community?
- Question 3: Tell us about a time you dealt with conflict. How did you handle it, and how do you work through differences to get to more common ground?
- Question 4: How do you prioritize needs in a resource-constrained environment, and what is the role of the Board in establishing and evaluating those priorities?
- Question 5: How have you built trust and worked effectively across differences, and ensured underrepresented voices are heard in decision-making? How would that inform your service on this board?
- Question 6: What are the priorities for ensuring every student is prepared for post-graduation success, and how can the board apply a lens of educational equity to meet those goals without compromising our high academic standards?

Interview 1: Garrett Wood
Question 1 Response
Mr. Wood shared that he was born in Gresham and is a product of the district attending North Gresham Elementary and Gresham High School and lives very close to the school. He is a residential paint contractor and works out of Gresham. Being a part of the community itself is important. He worked on the design committee for North Gresham Elementary, and was on the redistricting committee for the school boundary changes. He has served on the budget committee for the past three years and the board recently reappointed him to that position. Twice a year he serves as a field trip chaperone, and has a student at Gresham High as well as Clear Creek Middle School. Mr. Wood shared that he chooses to be here and made a conscious choice to live in Gresham. He understands the severity of decisions facing the district. He has to make decisions in his business, and he has to have a framework for those decisions. He shared that he has had to let people go because he is feeling the same constraints as the district. With this process he feels they are renting the space. The district was here before him and will be here after him. He wants to make sure it is better off for whoever will take the reins after them. He wants to make sure to be honest with what the school board really does. By being part of the team and having plenty of questions, but also trying to be a good listener.

DRAFT

Question 2 Response

Mr. Wood noted that there are opportunities to engage. He was just part of the budget community meeting that the superintendent put on at Gordon Russell Middle School, and he has seen somewhat of the framework and decision-making process. He understands the direction they are working with. He noticed the feedback loops, and how they are getting feedback from all of the population. The most important part is to close the loop and make sure the people that have talked have been heard. The difficult part of transparency and community engagements is they can't make people engage, but they can give them as many opportunities as possible. They are doing a good job of being as much a part of the process as the community wants to be engaged with.

Question 3 Response

Mr. Wood shared that for conflict he could talk about general contracting or many things. He asks is it really conflict? He identifies a common goal first. Are they working in the same direction, and are they here for the betterment of students, teachers, and community. The biggest thing is to be a listener. People want to be able to communicate and get it out. Sometimes conflict arises from not having enough information. If they start from a place of trying to give them as much information and empower people, the conflict resolves itself. There isn't a reason for conflict because they've resolved it already. They have an employee handbook, and there is a set of guiding principles they are all working with. De-escalation is what he does every time. It usually starts higher and moves down. They have to be calm and consistent.

Question 4 Response

Mr. Wood noted that he did some research on this question to look at what exactly is the school boards charge. How do they get to the decision they want to make? He shared the idea of pre-eminence education, of building a framework with resource allocation being based on effectiveness. His wife is a high school teacher. He always makes sure to do his homework, come with active questions, and be a productive part of the team. The State is only going to give them so much, and they have to figure out the district's priorities. This is not a business it is a school function, and the school district has to survive. People may have to get bad news, but there will be another day. Allocation of schools is the architect of the framework which includes defining a north star, policy guardrails, evaluating the priority, accountability, data monitoring, and public accountability. These are some of the things he was seeing responsibility-wise. They have to reach out to the people on the ground that are doing this every day. That is the best resource they have.

Question 5 Response

Mr. Wood noted that trust is earned, it is not something that just happens. This comes from showing up consistently and calmly, and listening. They need to make sure there is always a seat at the table for everyone. Trust comes with communication too, not everyone knows there are different opportunities so making sure they have those opportunities builds trust. Making time to make sure they are heard.

Question 6 Response

Mr. Wood shared that college and career readiness is looking outside into careers and defining what post-secondary success is. Can the board apply a lens to meet the goals? Equity is the floor and they are going to build the scaffolding to get people higher. Equity doesn't compromise goals. Everyone moves up with targeted resource allocation, and by removing gate-keeping mechanisms. It also has to be data-driven, and the district has been doing great work with math and also literacy. If he was chosen to be a member of the board, he will show up as prepared as he can, and will fulfill obligations as best he can. He is here because he feels it is his civic duty, and he really strongly believes in public education. Besides the emotional and conflict resolution, his kids have more opportunity. The counselors from grade school to high school are wonderful and have more hero-driven stories. He can't speak more proudly especially if people engage as a parent. He shared that he really wants to have this opportunity even in this difficult time to do the hard things. From a teamwork aspect, they are all going to have work together and he wants to learn the process.

DRAFT

Chair Petersen expressed appreciation to Mr. Wood for applying for the board position and asked if he had any questions for the board. Mr. Wood shared that whatever direction they decide, he is still looking forward to being on the budget committee.

Recess / Reconvene

Board Recess (6:15 p.m.)
The meeting was recessed at 6:15 p.m. and reconvened at 6:26 p.m.

Interview 2: Kayla Viramontes

Question 1 Response

Ms. Viramontes moved to Gresham in 2015, and has a husband who is from here. She loved Gresham instantly, and got involved in a lot of things really quickly. She has been a business owner for 18 years and works in marketing. She became an ambassador for the Chamber and served in a lot of areas. She noted that they have to roll up their sleeves and build the community they want. She has volunteered since she was 12. Ms. Viramontes feels like she's spent a lot of time giving her talents and expertise to the business community. Her passion is youth, and several boards she's been on have been geared toward youth. She is excited to bring her marketing expertise to the district. Her child is a 3rd grader at East Gresham Elementary and she loves the idea of being behind what her child is learning and how it feels to be in schools.

Question 2 Response

Ms. Viramontes shared that education and effective communication builds transparency. Parents just don't know the things. She is the President of Gresham-Barlow Youth Baseball and Softball and they have about 1200 parents. They do a lot of educating parents on what they don't know. A lot of frustration is not knowing why something is a certain way. Communicating and effective messaging from a business to a business or consumer is needed. Finding out how parents learn and get the communication. She knows the district communicates very well, but some parents don't read the information. How do they get the information to everyone?

Question 3 Response

While serving on the chamber board, Ms. Viramontes had a very contentious staffing situation. She was one that disagreed with the way things were being handled. It was very tense with lots of personalities and opinions. She tried to ask a lot of questions to understand their thought process for how they did things. She still disagreed with it, laid out how she thought it could be handled better, and then shook hands and moved on. Listening and understanding people's points of view, and making sure she could get across how she felt and potential ideas for how to handle things differently, then moving on.

Question 4 Response

Ms. Viramontes noted that the board's role is to constantly educate themselves on anything and everything they can. Then from there is collaboration. For her clients she talks to them about power partners, and building partnerships that are adjacent to them or ones that can help them reciprocally. What community partners are out there doing things the district can't do. How can they partner with them for services they want to provide but can't currently?

Question 5 Response

She shared that she has been on the Gresham-Barlow Youth Baseball and Softball for 8 years. They have 21 board members with lots of voices and all are important. She has noticed outside of the chair, vice-chair and secretary the rest of them don't talk much. Their voices still need to be heard. It is important to listen and she is a big communicator. She listens to what matters to them and what they care about. This is helpful for any board. The school district has the parents, the kids, community members, and staff, and they have to try to find out what everyone wants and make decisions from there.

DRAFT

Question 6 Response
Ms. Viramontes noted that this is a very heavy weighted question. She grew up in a very poor tax bracket, and is raising her kids in a high tax bracket. She has the opposite background and grew up in a small school with 82 in her class. Her kids are growing up in a huge school with lots of extra curriculars. She related this to business, where some have really tiny budgets and little knowledge of what they need to do for marketing. She is trying to understand and educate herself on what they come from with low income, low budget, and low standards at home. Also realizing they can't please everyone. They can't change the culture of their world right now, but they have to keep pushing forward with what they can do and make decisions so that everyone that can win, will win.

Chair Petersen asked if she had any questions from the board. Ms. Viramontes shared that she over-researched this and read all the pages on the board webpage. Chair Petersen then directed the board to their scoring matrix and asked the board to compare the candidates and identify which of the first two they prefer without any discussion.

Recess / Reconvene

Board Recess (6:40 p.m.)
The meeting was recessed at 6:40 p.m. and reconvened at 6:56 p.m.

Interview 3: Kelle Landavazo
Question 1 Response
Ms. Landavazo shared that she has lived in Gresham for about 34 years and is a native Oregonian from Baker City. She went to Eastern Oregon College at the time and came to work for the city in 1995. She retired last year, but during her time at the city for 30 years she held many different positions. She began in the city manager's office working on a project at the start of the citizen advisory committees, which was really robust and had a lot of intent around citizen involvement at that time. She got to work on the project and it really ignited her passion for doing community outreach because she hadn't done that before. She is a marketing major from the 80s. She really enjoyed the work and got to do a lot of it. As she got different positions, she was always able to stay engaged in doing that work. It's not for everybody because it can be difficult to do true, authentic community engagement. She has done a lot of community outreach in this community. When she was at a point she thought she was going to leave the city and go part time, she had a conversation with a fire chief at the time post 9/11. He offered her a job to go part time for the community response team training program where she could pick her schedule. She didn't know anything about fire, and it is really a community thing. She got the opportunity to experience going out into the community in a different way. It was very localized training, and was work that continued to help her feed that need for community outreach. When she first saw this board opportunity, she has long known when she retired she would seek an opportunity in this type of capacity. She didn't think it would be a school board because she doesn't have educational expertise, but doesn't think it is necessary. She is passionate about public education and very troubled where they are with it and the lack of support there seems to be with it. She thinks she has a skill set that is helpful serving on the board, and intimately understands the diverse needs of the Gresham community and how they have changed a lot over the last 10 years.

Question 2 Response
Ms. Landavazo knows that open and honest communication is always what is necessary for transparency, and that transparency is easier said than done. It is difficult and opens them up to criticism and conflict sometimes, but not doing it has a huge downside. Then they have to catch people up and it erodes trust.

Question 3 Response
Ms. Landavzo noted that conflict is present in most collaborative processes. They almost always involve a lot of other people. A lot of her work in emergency management has been regional work. Everyone has a different perspective. Sometimes conflict gets a bad rap because maybe it is just differences of opinion. She thinks differences of opinion are

DRAFT

really what gets them to good outcomes. Many times she has disagreed with colleagues on what they thought the best thing was to do, but if they are all working to the same objective, and are clear on what the mission is then they can get there. People need to be seen and heard and never be dismissive. It is much harder if they aren't all working toward a common goal, but when they can agree and can get there it brings a good outcome.

Question 4 Response

Ms. Landavazo noted that in emergency management a resource-constrained environment is always a given. There are never enough resources to do what they need. She is not sure that they are always prioritizing the needs, because there are not enough resources to meet the needs they have. It's important to have a really good understanding of what the mission is and what they have to get done. Then making sure that is in alignment with the needs of the people they are serving. That alignment is critical. In this environment it would be the students and staff, making sure they are getting what they need to the best ability. Sometimes there are regulatory things they have to meet; those are a given. Resource constraint is certainly a space they are in.

Question 5 Response

Ms. Landavazo shared that differences are not necessarily bad at all. It is what creates a good, rich outcome. She is always happy about that, noting it would be troubling if they were working on something and everyone was very agreeable. She is not sure that gets them to the right outcome. When everyone is respectful, they hear people and are all working towards the common goals. Ensuring underrepresented voices are heard is critical and it is hard. They have to do better in recognizing the barriers people have to engagement. It is frustrating when they can't do better, and they have so many lessons from COVID on that, and yet they continue to not do the things they need to do to hear from all people and meet them where they are.

Question 6 Response

Ms. Landavazo noted that this was a very hard question. At first she had no idea how to answer. She indicated in her letter she is concerned about not being able to prepare students for the world they will be entering in the now. The change is now, and they don't have a lot of time to prepare. They have a really complicated situation of no money while needing to make change, which is hard to do without any resources, and yet the kids are there and they have an obligation to get them ready. She shared that she doesn't have a good answer, but is happy to be a part of that conversation. All governments are having the same problem, the issue is common and they can't afford their services. Education doesn't have a pause button; people are coming to the door and they have to do that work. She doesn't know what the ultimate solutions are, but is hopeful and happy to work towards those solutions. She noted that she tried to look at the website to see a strategic plan. She didn't see that, but did see the mission. It is a great mission statement but they are just words, and they need a plan to get there. They have to ensure all students are getting what they need, that is where equity work comes in.

Following the interview questions, Chair Petersen asked if Ms. Landavazo had any questions for the board. She noted that she is curious about the strategic plan, and asked if they have one or have done any work on one. Superintendent Klinger shared that their plan is embedded in a couple places. They have a plan with 5 priorities they focus on, and are also talking about the need for formal strategic planning work because they have a lot of pieces that aren't all connected. Ms. Landavazo noted that a good strategic plan is really important, and is hard to do when they are just trying to keep the lights on, but they will get through this. Chair Petersen directed the board to their scoring matrix and asked them to compare the 3rd candidate to candidates 1 and 2.

Information Items

5. **Superintendent Evaluation Process** (7:19 p.m.)

Chair Petersen shared that he serves on the Superintendent Evaluation Committee with Director Puderbaugh and

Director Farrens who serves as committee chair. With the board secretary's assistance, they created a document to gather feedback from the board. Director Farrens noted that in the past they handed out a questionnaire the board members would fill out and bring back based on areas of evaluation. That is what they are doing again, but through Google forms so it is easier to compile and get the information. Board members will get the information of how the superintendent rated herself to refer back to, and the digital format has hyperlinks board members can use to see the evidence. The ratings will be in a half scale ranging from a 0.5 to 4. He noted when evaluating staff it is rare to get a 4. A person might get a 4 in one area, but mostly lives in the 2's and 3's, and if they are a new employee they might have a 1. If an employee has been there 5 years a 1 would be concerning.

Without names the board secretary will compile the information for the committee. They will review the ratings and feedback and then bring it back to the board. Responses will be due by 4:00 p.m. on the 20th. Board members will get an email tomorrow morning with the link to complete their evaluations. The committee is meeting the 27th to review the information, then Director Puderbaugh will put the information into a slide show to present in executive session at the March 5th work session. From there they will present the letter that is presented to the community during the business meeting. The letter typically shows 1 to 2 areas of strength and 1 area of growth. The superintendent is the only employee by state law that has an evaluation that goes to the public. They also have certain timelines they have to meet and then the contract has to be completed.

Some board members expressed concerns with how Director Farrens shared the rating system noting that it felt like they were trying to manipulate the way people might provide their assessment. They didn't appreciate the comment of a new employee probably being a 2 or 3, and that areas of growth are always going to be shown on an evaluation. They would prefer the communication be more general so as not to imply or infer things because they might not feel like the superintendent has areas of growth. There was discussion around why they are doing this as a collective, and providing the feedback to make a collective evaluation as a board. Other board members noted that in the time they have been on the board there has always been an area of growth and areas of strength, and the areas of strength have always been more than the areas of growth.

Chair Petersen added that they will see the 4 board conditions, which is what the evaluation is on and is what Tracy has provided for her self-evaluation. The board has tacitly approved that this is how they are measuring the actions. It is a project-based evaluation. If they had defined achievement as a 100% graduation rate, they're not evaluating the 100% they are evaluating the 90%. They are thinking of this as progress oriented and not goal oriented. When board members complete the form, they will have the condition along with a calibration of 1-4. Then they will be asked along with the score to provide the pieces of evidence they have in mind. They can provide additional evidence or comments.

Discussion Items

6. **Future Board Agenda Topic** (7:31 p.m.)

Chair Petersen shared that next Friday before their Strategic Planning meeting they will meet at Gresham High School at 8:00 a.m. Breakfast will not be served for this meeting. They will spend time at Gresham High, then Hall Elementary and will end at West Orient Middle School for their tour. The public meeting will start at 12:30 p.m. and they will debrief what they saw on the tours. Superintendent Klinger added that when they meet at Gresham High, they will leave their cars there and will ride in a van together. After their meeting at West Orient, they will have cars there to take people back to Gresham High to pick up their vehicles.

Closing Items

DRAFT

7. **Announcements** (7:35 p.m.)

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

February 20, 2026: Board Strategic Planning Retreat - 12:30-5:00 p.m.
Media Center / Library
West Orient Middle School

March 5, 2026: Regular Board Business Meeting - 7 p.m.
Council Chambers
Public Safety and Schools Building

8. **Adjournment** (7:35 p.m.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 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

DRAFT