



**Medford 7-12 Schools
School Board Report
August , 2025**

- 1) **Rolling out the new school year-** Most of our open positions have been filled with some great new teachers. We will have 7 brand new staff members at the high school. These include Ms. Bonde in special education, and Mrs. Inman and Mrs Revier in Science, and Ms. Anderson and Mrs. Scheer in English and Mr. Carney in math. We also have a new academic advisor for the high school, Nikki Plunket, who together with me will work to assist students with scheduling, transcripts, etc.
 - 2) **Faculty will be rolling in shortly-** New teacher workshop is later this week. There will be technology training on Wednesday and then a full day of orientation on Thursday. All teachers will of course report the 25th through the 28th. We have several changes and lots of good information to share as we prepare to welcome back students.
 - 3) **Changes of NOTE:** Open House has been moved to Tuesday evening from 5-7pm instead of the traditional Wednesday evening. This was due to several factors including the processing of paperwork for free and reduced lunches/fees as well as other registration requirements. Additionally, the HIGH SCHOOL has moved fall pictures to before school. These will take place from 9 am to 4 pm on Tuesday, August 26th.. Students unable to attend will be able to have their pictures taken on Sept. 12..
 - 4) **Handbook Updates/Proposals/Discussion:** The student and faculty handbooks are ready for your approval. [Student Handbook](#) [Faculty Handbook](#) There are several proposed policy changes, some due to legislation and others to fit current practice or changes in the environment. I have explained these in some detail below. I propose adding or changing the language in the following policies:
 - a) Language added to our Academic Integrity policy regarding student use of AI applications in coursework. As I stated last year, AI is a game changer and while we want to prepare students for a world that is relying on it more and more, we also want to prepare them to think critically, problem solve, organize, read, write, spell, etc. So wording has been added that passing off AI written statements without citing them will be considered plagiarism and is therefore subject to the academic dishonesty policies.
 - b) Attendance- Steele county has revised once again its take on truancy. After not doing any disciplinary actions for students above 13 for several years, they are not researching restorative measures that could be incorporated into a comprehensive system along with the expanding the pilot project through United Way and member districts called UPLift from last year. The group wrote a grant and was awarded money to expand their program and hire 2 more truancy interventionist/youth support coordinators. This program is voluntary and although we struggled last year to get parents to agree to be a part of it, we are hopeful with the added consequences of additional involvement if students continue to be absent unexcused, we will have more involvement. Also, there will be a person assigned to our district making that program much more accessible to families. So we have updated our attendance policies again to better fit/work with that agency as well as to reflect what was currently happening at the high school level.
 - c) cell phone policy/electronics- as you are probably aware, the state legislature mandated that all schools have a cell phone policy in place by March of this past year school year. Additionally, they mandated that all schools ban cell phones in K-8th grades completely bell to bell. We already had that policy in place so there will be no new changes for that
- Chromebooks- 7th and 8th grade students only- Two years ago we began the policy of

keeping CB here at school. There were check out procedures for students if they were ill or needed to finish an assignment as well as for E-learning. This was due to issues with forgetting, dead chromebooks, breakage, and using them for non-school related issues. Additionally, it was felt by our middle school team that students may be more on task if they didn't have the option to take home. They assured me that there is plenty of class time to complete daily work if students use it. Things improved. Last year, we discovered that students were working diligently to not only sneak chromebooks home, but to use them inappropriately. The second half of the school year, misuse and abuse was excessive. As a result, we have decided to go to classroom sets of chromebooks- much like students had in Elementary school. Core subject teachers will have classroom sets. Students who are ill, fall behind on an assignment, etc. can get a note from their teacher and bring it to the library to check out a "loaner device" to take home and complete the school work- much like they would check out a library book. I have updated the language to reflect that, as well as to explain consequences for violating the technology policy.

- d) Dress code - We had some students make us aware that the wording in our policy regarding Hoodies was unclear/open to some interpretation. So I have clarified that hoods must be down, completely on shoulders. Additionally, we had some students who were regularly wearing shirts that advertised beer, drugs, sex, and other things considered inappropriate and disruptive to the school environment. They refused to change their shirts and sometimes refused to cover it with a sweatshirt or jacket, so were using masking tape to cover the offensive works, pictures etc. This really did little to stop/solve the problem and students were well aware of what was under the tape. Therefore, the policy has been updated to say that covering with tape will not be an option and refusal to change or cover with a sweatshirt will be considered insubordination and subject to disciplinary action.
- e) Lockers and passes- minor language changes- we are no longer using SMARTPASS, but have instead purchased an add-on to our student information system Infinite Campus to request hall passes- so that language was updated to reflect the change. I also outlined what the "No Pass List" is and how that affects students leaving class. Finally, under the lockers section there was language added about sharing lockers - this is discouraged and can result in both or multiple students being billed and/or disciplined for damages and/or inappropriate/illegal items being found in them.

Faculty handbook:

- a) Syllabi and grading- We had a couple of incidents last year with confusion and problems related to teacher policies and grading. As a result, I've scheduled a syllabus workshop with my teachers to work on getting everyone on the same page, using best practice, and making sure that class/classroom policies align with school policies. I added some wording as well to the faculty handbooks to clarify things including: Syllabi must be posted to Google Classroom, weighted categories and how assignments are considered must be explained, and things like tardy policies, unexcused absences and academic dishonesty must be a part of the syllabus. I also updated wording to specify that assignments must be entered into the gradebook no later than the due date (not necessarily graded, but in the gradebook) and that all gradebooks must be updated weekly- impart due to the new MTSS program which will require Advisory teachers to inform students every monday of missing assignments and have teachers requesting students for remedial and make-up work.
- b) PD requests/Food and beverage/ student supervision- Language was also added to send me PD requests (previously they had just gone to site team) so that I can determine staffing levels prior to site team, No food or beverage in classes except water in closed and lidded containers such as Stanley's etc. (also in student handbook) Finally, after school supervision- if coaches or activities are starting later than 3:15pm, coaches and advisors need to provide supervision to students waiting

here at school.

- 5) **Site Team**-Planning for the first day of school. We will have an altered schedule to assist in making sure that students get the updates to the handbook that they need, have a chance to ask questions about anything that they are unclear about, do some planning for Homecoming, and then some time to get reacquainted with one another and their teachers. 7th and 8th graders will again have a separate schedule so that their teachers can help them become familiar with google, Infinite Campus, and a variety of other NEW things to middle schoolers without the added stress of finding classrooms amongst the rest of the high schoolers etc. they will then join the 9-12th graders at the end of the day for some fun activities.

Thanks!

Jen Ford