



Special Board Meeting of the Board of Education

Thursday, January 8, 2026 6:30 PM

This meeting was held virtually.

Board members present: Lilia Caballero, Kendell Ferguson, Erik Johnsen, Sandra LaNier McHenry, Sunny Spicer, Michael Williams, and Angela Zbikowski

A video recording of the Board meeting can be found on the district website at [this link](#).

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

Board Chair Kendell Ferguson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Board attendance was noted.

2. Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and Update

Chair Ferguson deferred to Board Directors Erik Johnson and Angela Zbikowski, who attended the financial audit meeting, to share their observations.

Director Johnson commended Clear Trails CPAS Auditor Kenny Allen for his thorough presentation of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and recognized the work of the district finance team, noting the district received multiple Certificates of Excellence. He shared that the information provided reassurance that the district is well-positioned to manage future financial challenges.

Director Zbikowski commended District Controller John Petach and the finance team. She noted that Allen effectively explained financial information in an accessible manner and discussed potential one-time expenses and the district's preparedness to address them. She shared that Allen indicated the district is currently in a strong financial position and thanked him for the comprehensive review.

Southern Oregon ESD Local Service Plan Review

Interim Superintendent Jeanne Grazioli explained that the purpose of the presentation was to provide new Board members with an overview of the Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD) Local Service Plan (LSP), which will be brought to the Board for approval at a future meeting. She then invited Assistant Superintendent of Operations Brad Earl to review the services selected by the district from the SOESD service menu.

Earl explained that the LSP is a comprehensive plan developed for all districts served by SOESD and includes a menu of optional services, noting that districts are not required to select all services offered. He referred to the spreadsheet outlining the services currently selected by the district, which include special education, information technology, library services, migrant education, and Indian education programs.

Board Directors asked clarifying questions regarding specific columns in the spreadsheet and the associated costs. Discussion included whether the selected services represent the most efficient service delivery model, how the district evaluates services when determining renewal, the high cost of supporting students with multiple and complex needs, and concerns regarding inequities in state reimbursement funding.

3. Superintendent Search Update

McPherson & Jacobson Search Consultants Steve Lowder and Mike Scott provided an update on the superintendent search process. The consultants reported receiving 26 applications from candidates across the Pacific Northwest and several other states. The applicant pool includes current superintendents, assistant superintendents, and district-level administrators with a wide range of leadership experience.

The consultants will review applications to ensure candidates meet the Board's established criteria, conduct reference checks, and develop a shortlist of approximately six to seven candidates for Board review.

Lowder outlined next steps, including providing Board members with qualified applicant files for individual review and developing interview questions.

Based on the applicant pool, Lowder recommended a modified, semi-closed interview process that would include interview panels composed of staff, community members, parents, and students. Panel members would interview finalist candidates and report strengths and areas of concern to the Board. Following discussion, the Board agreed to proceed with this approach.

Board Directors asked follow-up questions regarding panelist selection and confirmed dates for semi-finalist and finalist interviews.

Lowder also reviewed feedback collected during the December stakeholder meetings and public forums. The Board agreed the information should be shared publicly and requested staff follow up with a thank-you to community members for their participation.

4. Adjournment

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.