



Work Session of the Board of Education

Thursday, June 5, 2025 5:30 PM

Oakdale Middle School Room 230
815 S. Oakdale Ave.
Medford, OR 97501

All Board members were present:

Michelle Atkinson, Lilia Caballero, Kendell Ferguson, Jeff Kinsella, Suzanne Messer, Michael Williams, and Cynthia Wright.

A video recording of the Board meeting can be found on the district website at [this link](#). The slide presentation can be viewed by clicking on Extras listed next to the meeting at [this link](#).

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call

Board Chair Cynthia Wright called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and confirmed a quorum through roll call. She welcomed attendees and read the district's vision statement.

2. Agenda Adjustments and Approval

No objections were raised. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

3. Recognitions

3.a. MSD/RCC Early College Connections - SMHS Student Achievement

South Medford High School College and Career Advisor Stacy Carle recognized student Jamie Murphy for earning her Associate of Science Oregon Transfer (ASOT) degree alongside her high school diploma. Jamie expressed gratitude to Stacy, the Board, the district, and Rogue Community College for their support in her journey.

3.b. Oregon English Language Arts Teacher of Excellence

Ruch Outdoor Community School Principal Ryan King introduced Kim Neiswanger, a second-grade teacher recognized as the Oregon English Language Arts Teacher of Excellence. He highlighted her passion for storytelling and mentoring students through the book writing and publishing process. Kim expressed gratitude for the award, acknowledging the support of her colleagues and mentor.

3.c. Appreciation for Board Director Suzanne Messer

Chair Wright recognized Board Director Suzanne Messer for her dedicated service, including two years as vice chair and two years as chair. She was commended for her leadership, commitment to policy, student focus, and deep involvement in programs such as SkillsUSA. Fellow Board members praised her mentorship, dedication, and professionalism.

Board Director Messer reflected on her journey—from student to Board member—highlighting 16 OSBA conferences, her advocacy work, and the joy of handing diplomas to graduates, including her students. She shared the symbolism of *kintsugi*, a Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold, presenting a repaired pot to Superintendent Bret Champion as a symbol of growth and resilience.

Board Director Messer was presented with a commemorative plaque in honor of her service.

4. Recess

A short break was taken for photos with award recipients.

Board Director Michael Williams arrived during this time at 5:50 PM.

5. Work Session Items / Action Item

5.a. School Board Candidate Interviews

School Board candidates Ilex Brandenberger, Rhonda Nowak, and Sunny Spicer were asked a round of questions by School Board Directors. Candidates took turns answering each of the questions. At the conclusion of the interviews, the candidates returned to their seats in the audience.

5.b. Board Member Final Ranking, Discussion, and Appointment

Chair Wright asked the Board to take a few moments to review the responses to the interview questions, consider answers to the application questions, and be prepared to provide a collective decision.

Chair Wright opened the floor for Board Directors to state their top ranked candidate. All Board members, with the exception of Board Director Michael Williams presented candidate Sunny Spicer as their top ranked candidate. Board Director Williams abstained.

A motion was presented by Suzanne Messer and seconded by Jeff Kinsella to appoint Sunny Spicer to the vacant position #5 with the term ending June 30, 2027.

Discussion:

Board members agreed the candidates gave strong responses, making the decision challenging. Board Director Williams stated he would abstain from the vote due to concerns about the selection process but acknowledged that, had he participated, he would have found the decision equally difficult.

Roll call vote: Messer: Yea, Kinsella: Yea, Williams: Abstain, Caballero: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Wright: Yea

Result: Motion passed (Yea: 5, No: 0, Abstention: 1)

5.c. Oath of Office for Appointed Board Member

Sunny Spicer recited the Oath of Office and took a seat at the Board table.

5.d. FY2025-26 Budget Update

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Brad Earl, provided updated information regarding the state school fund forecast. Information included:

- Legislature affirms Governor Kotek's recommended \$11.359B state school fund for 2025-27
- PERS reform
- Incoming kindergarten class with high SPED needs
- Preliminary Federal Title I grants
- SIA funding set lower than approved budget
- State literacy grant \$0.9M higher than approved budget
- State Accountability measures SB141 passed

Earl advised the Board to begin considering long-term budget planning. He reflected on the district's financial challenges during the 2010 mortgage crisis, when significant cuts were made despite having just passed a bond. He went on to share that current trends suggest a declining enrollment and a shrinking district.

Board Directors raised concerns about projected increases in special education needs among incoming kindergarteners, the potential need for more special education classrooms, and requested data for enrollment projections.

6. Consent Agenda

6.a. Staff Assignment Report

6.b. Minutes from previous Board meeting

The consent agenda, which included the Staff Assignment Report and minutes from the previous meeting, was approved without objection.

Board Director Williams raised a point of order, referencing the May 8 Board meeting and expressed concern that proper procedures outlined in Robert's Rules of

Order had not been followed. He further noted that the motion proposed during that meeting was not clearly understood. In response, Chair Wright acknowledged the concern and affirmed that, moving forward, all motions would be clearly stated prior to a vote being taken.

7. Announcements

7.a. June 26 - Board Meeting at Oakdale Middle School - 5:30 PM

Chair Wright reminded attendees of the upcoming Board meeting that will be held on June 26 at Oakdale Middle School.

8. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:57 PM.

Chair of the District School Board
Medford School District

ATTEST:

Superintendent-Clerk