

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Directors- Work Session
Tuesday, September 26, 2017, 2017- 6:30 p.m.
Newport High School- Room W19
Newport, Oregon

Minutes

PRESIDING: Ron Beck, Chairman

Present: Ron Beck, Chairman; Amanda Remund, Vice Chairman;
Liz Martin, Jenny Demaris, Directors

Also Present: Tom Rinearson, Superintendent; Tiana Tucker, Director of Human Resources; Susan Van Liew, Director of Elementary/Special Ed.; Julie Baldwin, Director of Business Services; Jon Zagel, Director Secondary Ed.; Jean Turner, Consultant; Laurie Urquhart, Secretary

Excused: Karen Bondley, Director

Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Beck convened the meeting and called the work session to order at 6:30 p.m. with a quorum of four board members present. Director Bondley was excused from the meeting.

Care and Feeding of the Superintendent

Jean Turner, former board member and retired administrator from another state, led the board through a discussion regarding what to consider in the “care and feeding of the superintendent.” She listed several items for them to consider this year, given the fact that Superintendent Rinearson is retiring at the end of June and a new superintendent will need to be hired. She asked board members to consider:

-The need to find another Supt./Board Secretary. Ms. Turner reminded the Board that the current secretary serves both the superintendent and school board, and noted that not all districts have this structure (they may have secretaries for both).

Superintendent Rinearson suggested that he and two board members do the hiring, along with a District Office administrator. Board members did not decide when to hire this position, saying it may depend on how the superintendent search goes. This job description will be placed in Dropbox for the board’s review.

-Competitive Salary and Benefits. Ms. Turner stated the Board needs to determine “what you can afford,” and said that the Confederation of School

Administrators provides information on superintendent salary and benefits around the state of Oregon. Chairman Beck said he would also like to include information about CEOs in Lincoln County as well as COSA data. Director Demaris noted, "We are not just looking at applicants seeking a job, but those that like the job they have and are looking for new challenges and responsibilities. They may be looking to live at the coast, the quality of life here and the smaller environment."

-Benefits for the Superintendent's Family. This would speak to health, dental, vision insurance for the family. Superintendent Rinearson noted that there are fewer choices of insurance companies that serve the coast.

-Reducing Stress. Ms. Turner stated it is critical to ensure the Superintendent takes vacation, has a gym membership, etc.; utilize methods to reduce stress. Mr. Rinearson emphasized that taking care of the physical and emotional health of the superintendent is "huge," and added that it is a highly stressful job.

-Housing. If an external candidate was selected, the district could offer to assist with housing, said Ms. Turner (help find it, a stipend, etc.).

-Professional Development. "Remember that your superintendent needs to continue with professional development," Turner said. Mr. Rinearson noted that professional organizations and connections are part of the picture. "I always consider 'what am I doing to get better?'" he added. He urged to board to consider how to satisfy the superintendent's professional curiosity.

-Connect with all of the communities and staffs. Mr. Rinearson stated that when he arrived in Lincoln County, the then-board chair held a regional meeting in each area to introduce him and speak of the hopes and dreams of the district with the hiring of the new superintendent. Director Demaris suggested making a list of communities and key groups, and doing at least an annual check in with them. "This will go far in a bond election," she added.

Mr. Rinearson noted it would be beneficial for a new superintendent to know the "go to" people in each community. "They may not be in an organization, but people listen and talk to them."

-Attitudes and Expectations. Ms. Turner noted the importance of trust, and said board members should spend time with the superintendent.

-Don't expect and/or require immediate change, even with policies. Ms. Turner suggested the board give the superintendent time to learn the district and the policies before requiring big changes.

Mr. Rinearson stated the importance of someone knowing the historical pieces of why particular policies were adopted. Director Demaris suggested an index showing why a policy changed.

The Superintendent noted a new superintendent would cause change, just because of who they are.

-Respect the privacy of your superintendent. Ms. Turner noted board members should avoid calling the superintendent at home if possible.

-Relationship with the Superintendent. Confidentiality is critical, said Ms. Turner. She urged board members to maintain confidentiality about items discussed.

-No micromanaging. “You have one employee,” said Turner. “Don’t tell them what to do. If you hear something that doesn’t sound right, mention it to the superintendent.” Mr. Rinearson noted requests, questions, etc. made of board members should be routed through the superintendent.

-Other. Ms. Turner said board members are looked at differently when they are in schools. “You are looked at as a board member, not as a parent...even at parent/teacher conferences.”

Director Demaris noted the importance of connecting the spouse or significant other to the community as well. “You are recruiting the family, not just the individual.” She suggested developing a welcome packet for the new superintendent as well as their spouse or significant other.

Director of Secondary Education/Principal Jon Zagel stated, “The physical and mental toll of being superintendent is huge.” Mr. Rinearson noted that during his first three years in the district, he absorbed much negative energy “and did not let it go back out.”

Director of Elementary/Special Education Susan Van Liew stated it is important to think about the positions/people that will be gone in the coming year. “When you have a lot of people leaving, the work of the superintendent will be very different. People new in their roles could force the superintendent to be more hands on, since the support people will not know their jobs fully.”

Superintendent Rinearson reminded board members that he would not be at the October regular session. He said that Ms. Turner and Laurie Urquhart will discuss the superintendent search calendar at the next regular session. Director Demaris asked if the meeting could be recorded; Mr. Rinearson said that possibility is being explored.

Homework assignment for the Board. The Superintendent asked board members to think about “how you want the new superintendent to be.” (This was also mentioned at the 9/12/17 regular session.) He also asked the board to consider how they might want the new superintendent to do the ‘care and feeding’ of the board, i.e., a weekly newsletter, etc. He asked that board members send their thoughts to Laurie Urquhart by October 13th.

Chairman Beck said a question in a superintendent interview could be “How do you communicate?” Mr. Rinearson responded that the question can be posed, but board members should have “listen fors” in the responses given.

Mr. Rinearson pointed out the posters on the wall, developed during the last All Administrators meeting, and asked board members to read and think about them during an upcoming break. Administrators were tasked with considering a change in the structure of the district to having four regional administrators.

Break- 7:55 p.m. to 8:05 p.m.

Discussion on Central Structure

Superintendent Rinearson reminded the board of an idea that was raised at a July board work session regarding having regional administrators with a superintendent overseeing them. He said one thought was that this structure might be able to reduce the central structure.

Administrators broke into teams at the last All Admin. meeting to list both advantages and disadvantages of such a structure, and to generate a list of questions about it. One question that arose from administrators several times was “What problem are we trying to solve?” Director Demaris noted that the idea was simply another way to structure the district, not necessarily an answer to a problem.

The Superintendent said the idea came up when the board was discussing internal and external superintendent candidates and how “we best grow our own.” Chairman Beck said the regional administrators would make hiring a less experienced superintendent more viable, since he/she would have four experts around that person.

Mr. Rinearson said several items arose in considering this scenario, including the collective bargaining agreements. There is one agreement for each union that has to be applied across the district. “You would have to keep contract management in the central part of the organization,” said Rinearson.

He stated that business services would also have to remain centrally.

Director Demaris said the information provided (the posters) was “interesting but messy.” The Superintendent responded that if the district went to a four regional administrator structure “it would be messy and the person in the superintendent chair would have to balance it out.” Chairman Beck asked where the roles of the Directors of Elementary and Secondary education would go. Mr. Rinearson replied that there is not enough FTE currently to run the central structure and add the regional administrators. Director Demaris said it was not their intent to strip away the central office.

Mr. Rinearson said the thought of regional administrators is an intellectual exercise. “I recommend we keep the information in this messy form, which will help with a later

conversation.” He added that he thought it could take eight to ten years to deploy a structure like this.

Goal Setting

The board set a goal in 2015/16 of “By 2018, all LCSD schools will be performing at or above the state average, as measured by the Oregon Department of Education.” The goal has not changed in the intervening years, as it was a three-year goal.

Mr. Rinearson said the district would not meet this goal, in large part because three of four district high schools now use a different assessment (the ACT test) from the one providing information to ODE (Smarter Balanced). He said the schools selected the ACT test for valid reasons, but the board goal was not adjusted to reflect this.

The Superintendent said Oregon ranks low on graduation rates around the country, yet is in the top five percent on SAT results. “This is historically true,” said Rinearson.

Director Demaris stated people moving to the county look at test results as one measure of the local school district. Director Martin said the goal was written to provide some form of measurement of student achievement. Mr. Rinearson said that, because the organization shifted, the goal couldn’t be met.

The Superintendent noted there are many factors feeding into Report Card and test result data. “This year at Newport High, 40 students moved into the area who are credit deficient.” The state report card would be released the week of the next regular session.

Director Demaris asked, “What are the things we want to change?” and suggested board members ask questions at the upcoming OSBA conference.

Superintendent Rinearson stated that the state contract term for the Smarter Balanced test would be completed after this year.

The superintendent asked board members that, given the current year, what are the two or three things that they as a board want to set as goals within the district or for the board. “One is to hire a superintendent. Are there other things?” he asked.

Chairman Beck noted the board would need to work with the new superintendent to address the loss of institutional knowledge and positions. Vice Chairman Remund said she would like to see improvement in the schools; Mr. Rinearson noted this would be the topic for the November education session. “I recommend you not compare third grade to third grade. You need to compare third grade to fourth grade so you are comparing the same students.”

Mr. Rinearson noted the Smarter Balanced test was used through grade eight in 2016/17, but “You won’t be able to look at the high school level.” Director Beck

reminded the group of the realignment of buildings. “Part of reorganizing was done to get all teachers of a certain grade in the same building, to work together, etc.” said Mr. Rinearson.

He reported Waldport High again received the “bronze award” from U.S. News and World Report.

Director Martin said she would like to include a statement in board goals about connection with the community; “We make decisions based on what is best for our community.”

Superintendent Rinearson warned against overloading the organization. “It is good to be simple and explicit. An organization can only perform at a certain level. We need to set goals and manage the organization to get the maximum speed.”

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Chairman

Superintendent