

School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon
Board Study Session of July 8, 2014

INFORMAL MINUTES

The Study Session of the Board of Directors came to order at 6:02pm at the call of Co-Chair Pam Knowles in the Board Auditorium of the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N Dixon St, Portland, Oregon, 97227.

There were present:

Board of Directors:

Pam Knowles, Co-Chair
Ruth Adkins
Bobbie Regan
Matt Morton
Tom Koehler - absent
Greg Belisle, Co-Chair
Steve Buel

Student Representative:

Minna Jayaswal - absent

Staff:

Carole Smith, Superintendent
Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Office

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Nye, Executive Director of Girls Inc. of the Pacific Northwest, spoke on behalf of teen parents and the child centers that are part of a comprehensive high school plan. She asked the Board to please keep the child centers in the high schools. Teen parents are seldom asked what they need to be successful in school, and the biggest support they need is childcare.

David Porter spoke on the need for a Spanish immersion program at the George Smith School. There was enough parent interest on the west side for this program.

DISCUSSION: BOUNDARY REVIEW WITH PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Jim Jacks of Portland State University (PSU) stated that they were about to begin the internal alignment phase of the boundary review process. PSU staff would like to know what is on the table and what was not.

Director Regan commented that the District process has not always been what it should have been; the processes were too fast. This time, we are trying to do boundary review in a more structural, intentional way. Director Regan added that balancing enrollment, strong neighborhood schools, creating more equitable access for all students, ensuring every school has a robust program, and preserving the capture rate were very important.

Director Adkins stated that balancing of enrollment was important so that we have the appropriate number of students for each program and building. She would like to normalize the boundary review process; Beaverton does theirs annually. She would like to eliminate the hot spot crises.

Director Buel asked if PSU has prepared a map which shows each school, the number of students who would attend their neighborhood school, and the natural boundaries. Mr. Jacks responded no, but it was something that could be done in the future. Director Buel indicated that that was where one should start.

Co-Chair Belisle stated that the hardest part was determining the closest neighborhood school as his house is within one mile of three schools. Part of the discussion is how interrelated the issues are and we need to consider the current grade configuration.

Co-Chair Knowles stated that a discussion around K-8s needs to occur and that we need to look at the facilities that are too small to have a robust program. We should also look at where we would place more middle schools. 34% of our students do not go to their neighborhood school. Director Adkins added that we did not want to create additional upheaval and change. The Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Enrollment and Transfer (SACET) was currently discussing the issue of choice and were working with the PSU team in aligning their work. Director Regan commented that we need to also discuss what the correct size is for our schools. Co-Chair Belisle mentioned that we should also discuss transportation and socioeconomic status.

Director Morton suggested the creation of parity across the District, equity of opportunity, looking for a logical smart process that stands the test of time and would evolve with the changing demographics of our communities, and, no longer to distinguish the quality of schools on the zip code in which they reside.

Director Buel stated that a physical review was needed and that children should be able to go to the school closest to their house,

Mr. Jacks asked the Board if they had a strong preference about things that should or should not be included in a District-wide boundary review. Director Regan stated that we should include the ideal size of schools, natural boundaries, preserving our capture rate, impact of the bond in building new schools, more detailed population projections, charter schools, and alternative schools fit into the discussion. Skyline Elementary is unique in our District – would we allow an exception for them? Director Morton stated that we should not include school closures. Director

points. This discussion would occur at the next Board Retreat. Co-Chair Belisle commented that he would like meetings with PSU more often than less, depending on work flow. Co-Chair Knowles mentioned as the Board looks at priorities at their next retreat, that they remember what was said tonight. Community meetings were important for Board members to attend and report back on what you heard at those meetings. The major role for the Board will be to establish the policies that come out of the discussions.

DISCUSSION: SMATER BALA NCED ASSESSMENT RESOLUTION:

Director Adkins provided background information on the draft resolution. The opportunity was now for the Board to state its values and concerns on the Smarter Balanced Assessment. The draft resolution states the Board's position on the transition.

Director Buel presented an amended resolution. Standards have never been determined to help students. The Common Core probably does some good things, but the way it is being approached is wrong. In kindergarten, it was doing tremendous damage. The Smarter Balanced Assessment will not provide us with a grade level reading assessment; it was not going to give us foundational skills in math. The test tells you if the student can solve trick questions which are related in some manner to reading strategies that were not developed by students. We cannot even look at the test to see if it is any good. The resolution should say we will not give the SBAC test. We should be testing whether our students are at grade level.

Director Morton stated his appreciation of Director Buel's comments and added that he would like to speak to him at some point on the role that standards play in a classroom. Standards do not educate our students. He felt that Director Buel's amendments were completely on par, but maybe just needed to be tweaked somewhat.