

**Redmond School District
School Board Meeting
April 25, 2012**

In Attendance: Chair Jim Erickson, Vice-Chair Cathy Miller, Directors Ric Little, AJ Losoya, Bob Perry, Superintendent Shay Mikalson, RSD Staff; Mike McIntosh, Kathy Steinert, Barry Branaugh, Trish Huspek, Gina Blanchette, Sandra Harris, Dusty Porter, Steve Stancliff, Val Grindstaff, Linda Seeberg, Association Representatives – Karen Gray, REA and Sheri Solesbee, OSEA, Media-Leslie Pugmire-Hole (*Spokesman*), Ben Botkin (*Bend Bulletin*), approximately 35 community/staff members.

Board Chair Jim Erickson called the meeting to order with a quorum of five at 7:01 p.m.

Mr. Erickson reported the Board had a chance to tour Obsidian Middle School today and were able to see several classrooms. “The district has worked hard to focus on active involvement with students. The research is clear that students need to be engaged for learning to occur. Students today were actively engaged in profitable learning.”

Cathy Miller requested the time for citizen participation for non agenda items be postponed until after the students from Obsidian School made their presentation to the Board. Board members concurred with the request.

PRESENTATIONS

Obsidian Middle School

Sandra Harris, Principal of Obsidian Middle School thanked the Board for the opportunity to showcase some of the things that are happening at the school. The vision at Obsidian Middle School is to elevate teaching, elevate community and elevate outcomes for students. The performance plan drives their focus. “The leadership team meets to review their performance plan to ensure it is a living, breathing document.”

Rosemary Tyson second year math teacher reported that as a new teacher she has found the professional development time to be extremely helpful in elevating her own teaching. “Using the engagement strategies has gotten the kids talking about math. It has created a more engaging classroom, increased outcomes, and has decreased behavioral issues.

Several students were present to report on how their achievement has increased this year. They also reported their attitudes about school have also improved because they are feeling successful.

Dusty Porter, Vice Principal at Obsidian Middle School reported that one of the school’s focus’ this year has been to elevate the community at the school. “It comes down to creating a positive environment so that teachers and students can reach their potential.” He reported on increased staff and student attendance. In addition, student leadership opportunities and parent involvement have increased. They were able to cultivate 125 student leaders through the WEB programs, Wolf Pack Ambassadors, and Student Council.

WEB leaders Hailey Burress and Lisa Sage reported on their experience with the students who participate in the program. There are 67 grade 8 students who actively involved. Students strive to be a part of the program. They reported seeing less bullying in the hallways this year. Ms. Burress reported that she doesn’t see herself as just a leader to the students but also a friend.

Lisa Sage reported that it is exciting to see the students go from not seeing themselves as leaders to looking forward to having leadership roles when they go to high school.

In addition, an ambassador program was developed this year. Their motto is “Servant leadership starts with me.” This program provides an additional opportunity for students to achieve confidence in leadership roles.

Sophia, a grade 7 Ambassador stated that her confidence has improved and she has learned to give without expecting to get anything back.

Daniel, a grade 6 Ambassador stated, “I learned how to be a good role model. I learned to stand up for others and learned right from wrong. It is important to do the right things and to encourage others to do the same thing. This project has made a big impact on our school.”

AJ Losoya commended the school for building a great culture for the students. “The school is doing a great job.”

Unidentified Parent - Stated the afterschool programs have been a huge benefit to her child. She would encourage additional grants to be pursued to make sure the programs continue.

Jim Erickson expressed his appreciation to the parents, students and staff who spoke tonight. “It is important for all of us to see possibility realized.”

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Citizen Participation for Non-Agenda Items

Bob Shaffery – Stated he would like to defer to Karen Gray to speak to his subject.

Amanda Felton – Teacher at RHS. Ms. Felton stated that she has gone from teaching 25 to 39 students in a class, from teaching four periods per day to six, from 120 students each day to 220 and from 70 minutes of prep time to 55 minutes. “My words to describe this school year are helpless and hopeless.” She reported using sick leave, personal leave, and time with family so that she can grade papers. 50 of 175 of her juniors have not passed one or more of their classes. “Our district continues to pass students along and has diminished the quality of our instruction. With the demands of my job in the last five years I have had to sacrifice relationships with my students and family.” She encourages the Board takes pause to reexamine their current vision. She requests the Board support a schedule that will allow teachers to be what the students need.

Jim Erickson stated that the Board appreciates the passion in which she spoke. “The sacrifices you have had to make are clear.” He reported the Board has a discussion scheduled on the agenda that will look at priorities.

Barry Branaugh – Teacher at RHS. He reported that he is teaching two classes this year that he has never taught before. He spent a great deal of time in the summer and every break preparing the material for those classes. He has always had a personal goal that by the end of the second week he knew every student and their name. With the increase in student load he was not able to do that this year. “My biggest concern as we move forward with Shay leaving is the Board will be hiring a new superintendent.” In the 90’s the Redmond School District had a great reputation and this was the district to be in. A change occurred six years ago. We hired a superintendent who came in and thought it was her responsibility to fix the district. Programs were added and teachers never were given the opportunity to process and make it work. Resources just haven’t kept up. We have cut everything we can and what scares me is that we have created an unsustainable system. We have lost good teachers and administrators because we have created a system that is unsustainable.” Mr. Branaugh quoted Karen Gray, “We cannot have a Sax Fifth Avenue education at Walmart prices.” He is concern that if teachers cannot handle the stress, it is going to affect the students. “The Board has a task ahead of them. I appreciate all of the work Shay has done. Now the Board needs to figure out the next step and I don’t want the next step to finish off some people who are close to be finished off.”

Jim Erickson expressed his appreciation Mr. Branaugh for his dedication. He assured everyone that Superintendent Mikalson has heard the operational concerns and those issues will begin to be processed.

Barry Branaugh further stated, “We need to make sure what we create is best for kids and reasonable for adults. I understand we need to do more but it gets to the point where it is not longer reasonable.”

Cathy Miller asked Mr. Branaugh to elaborate on the subject of student/parent ownership of a student’s education. “How many opportunities to we give a student to fail

Barry Branaugh reported that he has seen a decrease in student and parent ownership. “We have enabled them too much. We have given them the impression it doesn’t matter because they will have more chances to pass.” The bulk of students who fail his class have many absences, homework that is not turned in, there is no effort to prepare for tests, and they are not engaged in class. The teacher is making all of the effort. The system is set up in a way where students don’t have to pass classes to move on.”

Chris Whipple – She is present this evening to talk about her daughter who attends the high school and to speak on behalf for Mr. Castro who wasn’t able to stay for this portion of the meeting. She reported Mr. Castro’s concern is similar to hers regarding the seven period day at the high school. She stated she is concerned that teachers don’t have time for practice and re-teaching. Her student works really, goes in at lunch and before school for extra help but is still frustrated. Her daughter is involved in FFA and leadership and is invested in her education. She is asking that we meet her half way. “She has the drive and desire and we need to provide her with the opportunity.” She would encourage a schedule of having five periods a day where she can engage with the teacher. Ms. Whipple understands that electives are important but would prefer her student know the core subjects inside and out. When teachers have 220 papers or finals to score, she understands they don’t have the time. She requests the Board consider the quality of the education we are providing to our kids. “It isn’t that the teachers are not working hard enough – they need something that is workable.”

Ms. Whipple stated, “I am worried about what type of leader will fill Superintendent Mikalson’s shoes. I don’t want someone to slide in at the eleventh hour for convenience sake.”

Jim Erickson stated, “Shay is a charismatic leader and he is leaving. That is okay. We, as a district, have the resources to continue. We need to keep listening to each other and find our way through these difficulties.”

Cathy Miller requested a change to the order of the agenda. She requested that before the Superintendent Update and Association Reports she would like to move the Teacher Appreciation Proclamation ahead on the agenda. Board members concurred.

Cathy Miller stated, “It seems very weak to read a proclamation about how much we appreciate the teachers because this should be said every day, by every parent, board member, staff member, and to each other. The board will be sending a more personal message to the teachers because a proclamation itself doesn’t show the depth and the tremendous belief that we have in you. It is the belief in who you are and what you are doing that causes us to be here. We could not be more proud to be by your side during these times. I hope as we move forward that we continue talking. We don’t need to hurt one another or the community because we are all hurting. We need to continue as a family to get through this. I believe it is important for the school boards and employee associations in the region to take the leadership to say to the State of Oregon, education needs to be a priority and that the current situation cannot continue. Teacher appreciation week it is not a matter of setting aside one week – we need to make a commitment to everyone; teachers, classified, administration and confidential. With this proclamation you need to know that we are committed to stand with you, side-by-side. They are all of our kids and we are with you. With that, I would like to read the proclamation.”

ACTION ITEM

After reading the proclamation, Cathy Miller moved to proclaim May 7-11 as Teacher Appreciation Week. Ric Little seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0

Votes: Jim Erickson-Yes; Ric Little-Yes; Cathy Miller-Yes; AJ Losoya – Yes; Bob Perry – yes

Superintendent Update

Superintendent Mikalson stated that as he reflects on his 11 years in the District there is no doubt that community is the answer. We can have hard discussions and still assume the best from everyone. “While we are working with the reality of budget shortfalls, I still believe the District can move forward. I feel privileged to have been a part of this community.”

Association Reports

Karen Gray - REA

- CLASS TIF Grant – vote pending on whether association members want to continue. Both Crook County and Bend will be voting this week. Met with Steve Stancliff and Lynn Evans to define the process to get the information out to staff. There are a lot of things in the works that TIF supports and funds. We want to make sure our members have all of that information before they vote. She anticipates a vote at the end of May.
- REA Executive Board is not going to take an official position – will provide information on both sides – they will not advocate one way or another
- Reported that Bob Shaffery has been asking about information regarding money that teachers spend on supplies. Provided a document to Jim Erickson regarding the items that are purchased. One of the things that struck her as she was going through was how much of these funds were spent on incentives and rewards for kids to do well.
 - *Bob Shaffery* – Stated this has been his “pet project” for several months. “Employees should not spend money out of their own pocket to support the students. These people feel it is necessary to spend this money as part of their jobs.” Mr. Shaffery had the following questions that he would like to have answered:
 - When the budget is approved would these kinds of items be included in the budget?
 - Are all schools represented in the survey results?
 - How much if anything is directly reimbursed to the teachers? Is there a maximum per teacher that can be reimbursed?
 - Can an ongoing collection of teacher expenses be gathered? Data recorded so that a buildup of those expenses would be available to know how much they are spending.
 - What is the Board’s reaction to the lists of what they are purchasing and how much?
- Karen Gray reported there are some things on the list that are readily available in the buildings. She would question why they are being purchased by teachers. “However there are many things that are purchased that are needed.”
- REA Scholarship deadline to apply is April 30th. There is \$2500.00 that has been set aside to cover those scholarships. The number of applicants determine the amount awarded
- Stated that watching the Obsidian Middle School presentation tonight was amazing. She has been in this building her entire career was very proud of everyone. “I have experienced a lot of change during the course of my teaching career. I am very sad to lose Shay. We have forged an amazing partnership based on trust and mutual respect. That being said, I completely appreciate the reasons he has given. I recently made a comment to John Witty about having to make a choice between our own families and someone else’s. There is a lesson to be learned from Shay’s decision, a man who doesn’t sleep and has a great deal of energy, and he still finds the pace and situation unattainable, then if he can’t do it, none of us can do it. That needs to be at the very top of the list as we move forward. We don’t have the financial or human resources at the pace that we are currently on. At what point do we start to see the negative consequences of the situation we find ourselves in? I think we are there. What is being asked of staff is not sustainable. The teacher we heard from tonight has the skills to address student needs, she doesn’t have the help. It isn’t training that is lacking, it is resources. Our working conditions are our student learning conditions and if we really care about every student, then we need to start in a different place to end up where we want to be.”

Jim Erickson stated that we can find a way through this. “Shay has led us to better ways to function. We now need to operate without him.” The Board has certainly heard everyone who has spoken tonight about working conditions.”

Cathy Miller stated that when we are talking about sustainability we are really talking about the human element of balance. “We expect students to balance their lives and we must be the role models.”

Sheri Solesbee - OSEA

- Held their elections and MaryAnne Agee has been elected as the new president. She will take over in May.
- There are four candidates for the student scholarship. Of those four, two will be selected to receive a \$500.00 scholarship.

ACTION ITEMS

Mike McIntosh reviewed the consent agenda with the Board. He noted that people who are retiring this year have been with the district a long time. He would like to acknowledge and honor the service these people have given the district.

Consent Agenda

- Personnel Changes
- School Board Regular Minutes from April 4, 2012
- Gift to the District

AJ Losoya moved and Cathy Miller seconded a motion to approve the consent as presented. Motion carried 5-0. Votes: Jim Erickson-Yes; Ric Little-Yes; Cathy Miller-Yes; AJ Losoya – Yes; Bob Perry - yes

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Transition Team

Jim Erickson stated, “It is the goal as a Board to create a plan that will hopefully move us seamlessly through the transition of Shay’s last couple of months with us. He reported the Board acknowledges that it is too late to hire a new superintendent for next year. “We will not rush to hire someone.” There will be a sequence of steps identified to move us as seamlessly as possible in Shay’s leaving. Superintendent Mikalson will serve as a mentor for whatever leadership team is established. “As a Board it is our job to provide clear expectations for that team in Shay’s absence.”

A document outlining the desired outcomes from tonight’s meeting was provided to the Board and audience members. A Transition Team consisting of teachers, classified personnel, two board members, community members, and administrators will be identified and will be tasked with the job of following through with the expectations established by the Board. The group will not be asked to prioritize the expectations.

AJ Losoya expressed his appreciation for the clarity the document provides and the sense of urgency that is being applied to this process. “The fact that Shay will be able to work with the team in advance of him leaving is huge. When looking at the Board priorities I am not sure these are the priorities that should continue for a variety of reasons. There will be a lot that will happen over the next few months and when I think about the leadership team that will be established, there is going to be a lot on their plate. That team needs to be successful next year and I don’t want to lose anybody else. We have clearly heard where everyone is regarding their stress level. When I read the priorities they are very global and would recommend identifying three or four. We are asking everyone to take on more and be more innovative and we need to do the same thing”

Cathy Miller stated that a repeated theme is that there has been so much change and they need consistency and balance. “The worst thing we can do is to take on things we cannot follow through on. We need to insure that wherever direction we identify we need to stay focused on that. If we are going to have to make hard decisions, we need to do it now.”

Jim Erickson stated it is the Board's job to define the goals and not the steps that need to be taken. "With the transition team there needs to be clarity on what the Board expects. Shay will eventually bring to the Board a recommendation regarding the structure and the people. At that point we owe it to the team to get out of operation portion of the district."

Jim Erickson further stated, "It is our job as a Board is to advance every child in the district. For that reason we can't avoid proficiency". It would be difficult for him to narrow it down to three or four.

AJ Losoya acknowledge our district is passionate about every one of these items but during the transition period he doesn't want to break the team next year and doesn't want to establish something that is unrealistic

Bob Perry stated he would hate to see any of the priorities deleted because he sees a lot of inter-dependency in them. "The team can come back and say and it is not reasonable to expect over the next 18 months that xyz can be done. It is the job of the team to provide a recommendation to Board."

Cathy Miller stated that she believes the bottom four are part of our culture and core values.

Jim Erickson stated that he believes the frustration expressed wasn't related to the concept of proficiency but more about how we get every child to proficiency under these working conditions.

Bob Perry stated, "When we say getting "every child" to proficiency that bothers me. We have students and parents who simply don't care and we are expecting our teachers to go above and beyond. We need to put our efforts toward the students who care."

AJ Losoya stated that he strongly disagrees with that statement. "I don't care how much kid's resists you can't give up on them.

Superintendent Mikalson stated, "Proficiency is not about having natural consequences, it is our obligation to never give up on a student. The bottom four should be what should be happening every day in the district. I feel the focus should be on the top four going into next year".

Ric Little believes this is a working document and something that can be adjusted. At this point he wouldn't change anything. "If the Transition Team comes back with other recommendations then it can be adjusted."

Superintendent Mikalson stated that he appreciates AJ Losoya's perspective. "The best way to get there is to find the sweet spot between conflicting ideas. We need to make sure we are charging to support the work that is in place and not creating new things. The leadership team that is established should come back to the Board with a recommendation on what is reasonable given the resources provided. He would also agree with AJ Losoya that the bottom four are ingrained in the culture. "The work in this transition is to support those things that are already in place."

Karen Gray stated that she has concerns around the Board going forth with a reaffirmation of what has been a priority in the past and to expect people to believe it is going to be any different than this year. "I believe letting loose of some of these things does not mean people don't want to be the best. Rather than continuing to have this list of lofty priority goals, tone down the language and flip it over to a support piece. I have serious concerns that if a recommendation comes forward saying they are all important and we are not going to back away from anything that sends a message we heard you, but we didn't hear you."

Superintendent Mikalson stated the first goal is to have the Board provide some clear direction around priorities. The next step is to meet with the Transition Team who will provide a sounding board for him regarding his recommendation on a leadership team structure. That recommendation will come to the Board on May 16th. The Board will ultimately be the ones to approve or make suggested changes to that structure.

There will be clear lines of authority that will be established in the recommended leadership team. “We currently have a collective team that is accomplishing everything now. I just help connect the dots. It is important to note the district’s structure will not be “leadership by committee.”

After a continued lengthy conversation, the Board determined the following expectations for the new leadership team:

The Board expects a committed effort to support:

- Proficiency Based Learning
- Student achievement
- Effective Assessment Strategies
- Growth based evaluation for all staff
- Focused professional development

The Board expects a commitment to:

- Collaborative processes
- Community stakeholder partnerships
- Fiscal responsibility
- Clear delineation of responsibility

The charge of Superintendent Mikalson, with the assistance of the Transition Team, is to come back to the Board with a recommendation on May 16th on what the leadership structure should be and who he believes can fill those positions to meet the expectations of the Board.

Ridgeview High School Tours

Open Houses are scheduled for May 3 and May 29.

The Board discussed what they would like to see included in the tours:

- This is a celebration regarding all of the construction that has occurred with the money the voters approved. The Board would recommend having information on all of the projects available on either poster boards or video feed
- We need to say “thank-you” to the community and to celebrate the renewal that has taken place
- Requested that a professional banner be made that simply says, “Thank you Community”
- At the second open house the Board requests there be information on how the building affects learning, reduces operational costs, and longevity.

Financial Reports

Mike McIntosh reported there was a finance committee meeting on Monday. The reports being presented this evening were all reviewed by that committee. Mr. McIntosh provided an overview of General Fund Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2011-12 Year to Date Actual versus Budget through March 31, 2012.

The District’s goal is to maintain a \$2.5 million dollar reserve. We are taking the savings from this year and rolling it into next year to mitigate the budget deficit.

Facilities Grant – Ridgeview High School must be open for six months before applying for the grant. Any revenues from that grant would not be received until May of 2013.

Board Updates

None

Requests for Agenda Items

None

ADJOURN

*Bob Perry moved and Ric Little seconded the motion to adjourn at 10:49 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.
Votes: Jim Erickson-Yes; Ric Little-Yes; Cathy Miller-Yes; AJ Losoya – Yes; Bob Perry - yes*

Jim Erickson, School Board Chair

Trish Huspek, Executive Assistant