

**Redmond School District
School Board Work Session
September 13, 2011**

In Attendance: Chair Jim Erickson, Vice-Chair Cathy Miller, Directors Ric Little, AJ Losoya, Bob Perry, Superintendent Shay Mikalson, RSD Staff; Mike McIntosh, Trish Huspek, Gina Blanchette, Media – None

Board Chair Jim Erickson called the meeting to order with a quorum of five at 1:04 p.m.

The purpose of the work session is to provide the Board with an opportunity to review meeting procedures and protocols as well as an opportunity to review policies that govern the operation of the Redmond School Board.

Board Communications Policy BHC

Cathy Miller reported that during the last revision of Policy BHC the issue of needing three board members to concur on an item being added to the agenda was inadvertently deleted from the policy. She recommends this language be included in the policy to ensure consistency with current Board policies DBD and BDC.

The Board members agreed upon the suggested language changes. The adjustments will be made to the policy and brought forward at the October 12 Board meeting for final approval.

There was discussion regarding the processes used in the creation of an agenda. In addition, there was a lengthy discussion regarding the protocol that will be used to add agenda items after the draft agenda has been sent to the Board. It was determined:

- Board members will email the Board executive assistant and superintendent with the item(s) they are requesting to be added as well as why the Board member feels it is pertinent for discussion by the entire Board.
- After consultation with the superintendent, the executive assistant will forward the information to other board members to determine if there is enough interest in the topic to warrant it being added to an agenda.
- Board members will respond via email to the executive assistant if they either do or do not feel it should be added to the agenda.
- If three or more board members feel it is a timely and pertinent topic, the executive assistant will add it to the final agenda

Robert Perry stated that he spoke with a member of the City Council and this policy is consistent with the procedures they use.

There was discussion regarding emails and the fact that they become a public record. All patron inquiries can be responded to by individual Board members but the superintendent and executive assistant should be copied on the email. If it is an operational issue, the Board member should let the patron know their concern is being forwarded to the superintendent for follow-up.

Board Meeting Structure

Minutes

The minutes should provide adequate specificity to allow anyone reading them to understand the basics of what a discussion entailed and the reasoning behind any decision reached.

- Cathy Miller stated she is comfortable with provocative/heated discussions being recorded in the minutes to show the public that they are all individual people with individual ideas and opinions.

- Capture the main points about the topic and points of disagreement so that everyone feels heard in the meeting and represented in the minutes.
- Individual Board member votes should be recorded in the minutes.

Regular Elements of an Agenda

- Cathy Miller noted that when visiting schools last year, as soon as the presentation by the school was completed the parents and students would leave. In an effort to engage more people, she would like to have the Superintendent Report at the beginning of the meeting. This would ensure everyone in attendance would have an opportunity to hear important information shared by Superintendent Mikalson.
- Likes having the student representative from RHS come to the Board but would like a more in-depth participation including a student voice on discussions and decisions the Board is engaged in. They should be notified in advance of a topic the Board would like their input on. The Board requested that the student representative from Redmond High School be in attendance at the October 12 meeting to provide them with information on what the Board would like from their participation at meetings.
- Requests that the agenda be kept flexible enough so that when a meeting is going later into the evening adjustment to the agenda can be made to accommodate those in the audience waiting to present to the Board.

Bob Perry would prefer having the presentations and discussions at the beginning of the meeting.

AJ Losoya stated that as a Board they need to do a better job of encouraging attendance and participation of staff at Board meetings.

Superintendent Mikalson reported that he has spoken with staff members who are uncomfortable with being called upon for their opinion “on the spot” when they are in attendance at Board meetings. He stated that he doesn’t know for a fact that this is influencing attendance but it could be one reason.

AJ Losoya stated that if we are looking for stronger community participation perhaps we need to consider what the best time of day would be to have Board meetings. There was discussion regarding the possibilities of various start times.

- When the new high school comes on line could we consider partnering with COTV to broadcast Board meetings? This would be an additional way the Board could make themselves accessible to the community. This would allow patrons to view the Board meeting when it fit into their schedule. Superintendent Mikalson noted that over time this could be used as an educational opportunity. It would also be beneficial to provide information on how patrons could provide feedback to the Board after they have viewed the meeting.

Hot topics

- Create topics in advance that would be placed on the agenda as a discussion item or presentation, (i.e., what is Proficiency and the difference between earning credits verses proficiency and how that relates to obtaining a diploma)
- Formulate a calendar with hot topics listed

Cathy Miller stated that the Board does not do a good job of providing educational opportunities. She would suggest having students and teachers model best practices. For example, teachers and students could demonstrate what Proficiency is. She believes it would help to engage the community with more dynamic presentations.

Superintendent Mikalson spoke to the fact that traditional Board meetings are about the business of the district.

Jim Erickson believes it could be possible to marry the hot topics with the operational pieces of doing traditional Board business.

AJ Losoya stated he is concerned that if the Board is driving the “hot topics” they are defeating the purpose. He believes those topics should be suggested by other sources like students, parents, and community members.

Superintendent Mikalson will speak with the principals to have them engage these groups to determine some suggested topics.

Cathy Miller stated some Board members serve on other committees and at times have information that would be beneficial for all Board members to have. There was discussion on the best way for that information to be shared with the entire Board. It was determined that a “Board Updates” section would be added to the agenda at each meeting.

Jim would encourage all Board members take an active role in responding to meeting participants.

Listening Sessions

Superintendent Mikalson asked Board members for clarification on what the focus of the listening sessions will be. Is it a parent audience or is it an educational opportunity for staff? He isn't sure both can be achieved during the allocated time. Superintendent Mikalson requested direction so that he is clear on what to deliver.

AJ Losoya stated that last year's sessions were discouraging due to lack of participation from staff and parents. It is important to hear from both of those groups but the most important asset are the students. He believes it would be beneficial to engage the students to hear their perspectives.

Jim Erickson stated he would like to hear from parents, staff and students. He would like to hear what Proficiency means to them, what changes they have seen, what are their fears, etc. In providing these opportunities it will be the Boards responsibility to create an atmosphere of trust for people to truly express how they are feeling.

Superintendent Mikalson stated that his goal is help parents know that we truly care and want to know about what is going well and what needs improvement for their students. He reported that outside of athletic concerns, he rarely hears from a parent. He encourages quality feedback from parents about individual schools and the district.

Cathy Miller acknowledged that everyone is struggling and schedules are tight. She suggests scheduling listening sessions with PTO's first and expand from there.

Superintendent Mikalson reported he is planning on having parent summits at the building level to provide educational opportunities. He feels strongly that as a district we need to hear from parents.

Bob Perry stated that it is important to find out what people don't understand about Proficiency. He would encourage the development of a side-by-side comparison on how we used to educate vs. the proficiency model.

Listening Session Topics:

- Provide a list of five possible topics
Cathy Miller feels that Proficiency should be a constant on the list. She also believes that the question of how to communicate better should also be asked each time they are in a school
- Principals will engage parents to find out which topics they want to discuss when the Board is scheduled at their building
- Use these conversations as a springboard to focus on topics, educate, and hear at the same time. Could record the questions as well as responses and post on the district website for everyone to have access
- The main focus of these sessions will be for parents but they are open to anyone who would like to attend.
- Email communication about these meetings could be sent out to community members

Cathy Miller believes these session should not be called listening sessions, but rather something that would better communicate this is an opportunity to dialogue with the Board and superintendent regarding one of five possible topics.

Superintendent Mikalson would recommend having staff make suggestions on what the five topics would be. Those suggestions would then be forwarded to the Board for review.

School Presentations

Jim Erickson would suggest providing schools clear direction on the topic they will present on. Presentations should include students.

Superintendent Mikalson reported that each school has been specifically charged to implementing a school performance plan. His recommendation would be to have the school presentations be an opportunity for the school to report on what they are having success with and what isn't working. It would also be a time for them to report on the strategies they are using to meet the goals established in the plan.

To encourage communication with Redmond High School students it was proposed that the Board and superintendent conduct a town hall event with RHS student council members this year.

Superintendent Mikalson will provide information to building principals regarding the expectations of what the Board wants to hear and see when they visit the buildings. The target date for the implementation of the new format will be at the October 12th meeting at Elton Gregory Middle School.

Ric Little inquired if it would be beneficial to reward students for attendance at Board meetings to encourage attendance. Suggested it could be something small to thank them for attending.

Jim Erickson stated that he would encourage Superintendent Mikalson to create systems where the presentations are the rewards for the students.

School Tours

Jim Erickson requested when they are touring the schools the Board be shown aspects of the school performance plan; where the plan is in place and the strategies that are being use. He stated that, "I don't want to make these visits threatening but I do want them to be real."

Decision Making Processes

Jim Erickson stated he wants to make sure all Board members are free to have their opinions, discuss them in public and move forward to consensus. Board members will listen to each other, appreciate what everyone says and then ultimately make a decision. All conversations should be respectful. Board members need to be able to "agree to disagree" in a respectful manner.

Cathy Miller stated it would be helpful have a chronological list, from now until June, of key issues and the timelines for decisions that will need to be made. She is concerned that in the past some decisions were made in a compressed decision making timeframe. She wants to make sure Board members have enough time to fully understand and research a decision before it needs to be made.

She also requested that if there is a decision to be made on an issue and the meeting is going late into the evening that the decision be postponed until the next meeting so that decisions are not made in fatigue or emotion. Wants to make sure the systemic structure we are building allows staff enough time to provide information.

Jim Erickson stated that he encourages all Board members to know they have the option of indicating they need a break from the conversation and request a postponement of a decision.

Jim Erickson asked if Board members would like to select one Board member per meeting to be the person to listen and respond to meeting participant concerns/questions.

In response to Jim's question, AJ Losoya stated that each Board member has a different background and life experiences and feels that everyone should be able to respond to patron concerns as they feel appropriate.

Ric feels that each Board member has the opportunity to respond to inquiries from meeting participants.

Policy Compliance

Cathy Miller stated, “If we are expecting our staff and administrators to step up, we as a Board need to walk the walk ourselves and take the time to ensure our policies are relevant to Redmond School District. Through policy we need to clarify our expectations as a Board. Regardless of what Board member comes in and out, if we can upgrade our expectations in policy, we should do so. If we support the superintendent in the work that he is doing and our policies don’t give him the authority to push, we have a responsibility to retool them to ensure his expectations are enhanced and not undermined. These policies are the structure that allows Superintendent Mikalson to do the work in the district.”

Cathy Miller provided the Board with copies of the following policies and asked they be reviewed to ensure they reflect the Board’s educational philosophy:

Policy AD – Educational Philosophy

Cathy stated she feels this is the policy that everything in the district is built upon. Board members agree that the first paragraph needs to be revised. The Board requested that Superintendent Mikalson revise the policy to ensure the first paragraph is consistent with the districts philosophy and goals.

Policy AB – The People and Their School District

Cathy Miller stated she feels the policy needs to be broader. In reviewing the policy language Board members made suggested changes to the second item revising to read; “The schools are strengthened as support is received from an informed public.” The revised language will be made on the policy and presented a first reading at the October 12th meeting.

Policy AE – District Goals

Board members requested that Superintendent Mikalson provide the Board with a revised version of the policy ensuring the language aligns with District goals.

The following policies are being reviewed and under discussion for possible revision by January:

BA – Board Goals

BCBA – Student Liaison to the Board

BD/BDA – Board Meetings/Regular Board Meetings

Cathy Miller noted it is not prohibited by law for Board members to attend social gatherings together as long as Board members do not discuss district business. Need to add language to the policy that addresses meeting to gather information.

BDDH – Public Participation in Board Meetings

BF – Policy Development

BFD – Board Policy Implementation

BG – Board-Staff Communications

Cathy Miller noted the Board is currently out of compliance with Policy BK – Evaluation of Board Operational Procedures which states, “The Board will complete an annual evaluation of its function as a Board.” The Board discussed the need for such an evaluation and determined that Jim Erickson and Ric Little will, between now and the end of December, work together to craft a draft evaluation tool. The executive assistant will provide them with recommended Board Evaluation tools from OSBA.

Cathy stated that she would be willing to take the policies, make suggested language revisions and provide them to Superintendent Mikalson to provide input. The executive assistant will check on required language as determined by current Oregon statutes for each of the above policies.

Superintendent Mikalson reviewed with the Board:

- A list of Strategic Planning Decisions that he will be coming to the Board for a decision between now and June.
- Reported the Redmond High School principal position will be posted during October/November with interviews proceeding in January/February. Superintendent Mikalson is anticipating a large candidate pool.
- The same process that was used to determine the Ridgeview High School planning team will be applied to identifying the Redmond High School planning team.
- Mr. Loving will use both teams to provide leadership as we look toward next year.
- It is important to note that the District is actually opening two new high schools.
- RHS staff were invited to a planning session. From that meeting we have 25 pages of notes providing feedback regarding the remodel. There are a great number of ideas that will be narrowed down during the process. They are in the beginning of the design development process. The process will begin with the selection of the leadership team of 10 people.
- Reviewed the Redmond High School draft guiding principles:
 - Provide more flexible and variety of learning/social gathering spaces
 - Provide dedicated staff collaboration and workspaces
 - Instill a sense of community and pride
 - Connect and embrace the outdoor environment
 - Make a more functional organized school
 - Provide up-to-date technology throughout
 - Make the school welcoming
 - Provide a safe and secure environment
 - Provide a healthy and efficient environment

Questions for Superintendent Mikalson and Mike McIntosh:

- Q. AJ Losoya reported that he recently attended an OSBA conference in Bend where he was able to hear a powerful presentation on bullying. He asked Superintendent Mikalson what RSD has done to reach out to students to find out if there are places in the school that are unsafe. One of the strategies presented at the conference was that other schools have provided a note card to each student so they can write down the areas within a school they feel are unsafe.
- A. Superintendent Mikalson reported that bullying is addressed in the district. One example is that at the middle schools students are provide a map of the building and are asked to highlight areas that they feel are unsafe areas in the school.
- Q. Bob Perry asked Superintendent Mikalson if the District is anticipating addition money that will assist in the opening of Ridgeview High School.
- A. Mike McIntosh reported that we currently have \$1.6 million in an account as start-up funds. These funds are outside of the general fund operating budget. From those resources the school will need to purchase a secretary, custodians, textbooks, computers, athletic gear and uniforms. In addition, money from the bond were set aside in the Bond Furniture and Fixtures account which can purchase items that are a permanent part of the building (i.e., desks, computer servers, etc.) Anything that is not a permanent part of the building comes out of start up funds. The District will apply for the State Facilities Grant which historically reimburses a District for 3-4% of the hard costs of the building. That would be approximately \$2 million that can be used to augment the start up fund. Staff are currently working on extending general fund protection into the second year. After that there will be general fund increases for operation of the building. There will be some additional staff increases but most of the staff will come from existing staff at RHS.
- Q. Jim Erickson asked if there is an internal plan to implement School Improvement Wednesdays

- A. Superintendent Mikalson reported there is an item on tonight’s agenda that will provide the Board an update on the implementation of those days. He stated there are leadership teams at each building who are working to implement quality professional development on those days. Superintendent Mikalson noted that the district website will list what is happening at each building on those days.
- Q. Cathy Miller asked if there is a sustainability plan in place for Community Schools. She is concerned about the continuation of the programs after the grants have expired.
- A. Superintendent Mikalson stated the Board will receive a Community Schools update from Desiree Margo during the regular Board meeting tonight. During that update, she will be addressing the steps being taken to ensure sustainability of the programs.

Superintendent Mikalson reported that our current enrollment is very close to what was projected during the adoption of this year’s budget. Elementary schools are growing and slightly above projections. The secondary buildings are right at projections. The RPA has met their cap of RSD students.

In response to a question regarding seniors who have not passed the required reading test to graduate, Superintendent Mikalson reported that there are 35 seniors who are currently receiving interventions to help them pass the test.

When asked what Superintendent Mikalson’s main concerns are, he stated that every adult in the Redmond School District is being asked to do more. He is confident that while this is the right thing to do, there is always the concern of how to support staff to do a good job and still improve. He stated that class sizes are budgeted on good numbers. While things are not perfect, it is one of the best in the region.

Jim Erickson made comment on the article that was in the Bulletin regarding Ridgeview High School and the inaccuracy of the reason stated for not opening the high school this year was due to “lack of funding” instead of the actual reason. Cathy Miller indicated she is still upset regarding the misinformation that was printed in the newspaper and believes the Board should take action to make sure there is a retraction printed to indicate that from the beginning of the construction process Ridgeview has been scheduled to open September, 2012.

ADJOURN

Bob Perry moved and Ric Little seconded the motion to adjourn at 5:25 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Jim Erickson, School Board Chair

Trish Huspek, Executive Assistant