



FERN RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 28J

School Board Meeting Minutes

WORK SESSION of the FERN RIDGE SCHOOL BOARD

September 17, 2026

Zoom Webinar & In-Person Meeting
88834 Territorial Rd.
Elmira, Or 97437

CALL TO ORDER: The work session and planning meeting for the hiring process of the next superintendent of the Fern Ridge School Board was called to order by Chair Grover at 5:00pm.

In attendance were Directors WC Grover, Brian Kirkpatrick, Kathleen Pizzola, Lisa McCann, Mark Gent, Quanah Bennett, student representatives to the board Penny Cordon and Kendall Moeller and Kathleen Rodden-Nord, Human Capital Enterprises, Consultant.

We have a shared vision in the Fern Ridge School District: Provide excellence for every student so that each will reach their greatest potential.

Thank you to the members of the public who have joined us. As a reminder, School Board meetings and work sessions are meetings of the Board held in public, providing an opportunity to observe the Board's discussion and actions.

In an effort to conduct official Board business, we ask that the audience be respectful and refrain from questions, comments, and unnecessary noise while the Board conducts the meeting. Also, please note that all Board meetings are live streamed and posted on the School Board area of the website.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2. Introductions: Kathleen introduced herself to all members of the board.

3. Status Report: So far, the 1:1 Board conversations have occurred, and this planning meeting. Next up is Online Survey and Focus Group Zoom meetings.

4. Staff Support:

- **Logistics, communication flow**-directly to Brie, WC, and Kathleen. Communication out to staff and community is ParentSquare, website and emails.
- **Communications and website**- There is a dedicated page on the Fern Ridge School District website. This will be updated throughout the process with the timeline, surveys and application links.
- **Focus Groups**-see Item #6.

5. Timeline of Activities (Addendum A): Kathleen discussed the timeline draft and stated the timeline will need to be finalized by the October 19th meeting with board approval. This will be posted on the website after approval.

6. Planning for Focus Groups (Addendum B): Kathleen explained that there will be ten categorized groups of up to six people each. The Staff, Student and Parent/Community groups will be chosen by lottery. These are 40-minute Zoom meetings to discuss the district's positive aspects and challenges, and what are important aspects of the Superintendent in our district. These will be scheduled in the first two weeks of October.

7. Communications Logistics and Norms:

- **Board with candidates**-candidate suggestions and questions are directed to Kathleen and the website.
- **Board with consultant**-email or call.
- **Board emails regarding candidacy advocacy**-Please send all recommendations or candidates to Kathleen.

8. Internal Candidates: It was decided as a group that internal and external candidates follow the same process during the screening and interviews.

9. Parameters of candidate identification: It was decided to keep all candidates confidential until the announcement of the new Superintendent.

10. Questions: Chair Grover wanted to discuss the community panel, background checks and see what room there is for budget additions.

11. Future Agenda Items:

- **Next Superintendent Criteria** – Board action on 10/19
- **Finalized Timeline** – Board action on 10/19
- **Salary Range for new Superintendent** – Decided on 10/19
- **Advertising/scope of recruitment**-It was discussed that no extra advertising would be needed outside of what is already contracted with HCE.
- **Residency Requirements** – It was discussed that the new Superintendent would need to reside within Lane County.
- **Possible Confidential Community Interview Panel** –
After a time of discussion on what this would look like and who would participate, it was determined that early January would be the selection process to get a full panel of 12 stakeholders for an interview session.

Director Pizzola moved to approve the Confidential Community Engagement Interview Panel session and not to exceed an additional \$2,000 charge, seconded by Director McCann. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, McCann, Pizzola and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

- **Format for Semi-Final and Final Interviews** – Final Interviews should be at a different location than district facilities to help keep confidentiality. It was also discussed that they would not be hybrid virtual and in person so the process is equal for each candidate. There was a time of discussion about phone reference checks that will occur between the board members and the finalists. HCE will supply the script and the people that will be called for each finalist.
- **Background Checks/ Due Diligence** -During a work session in December this will be discussed. It will then be decided in January how many finalists will be background checked.

ADJOURNMENT (Agenda Item 12): The work session was adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Attest: _____
School Board Representative

Gary E. Carpenter, Jr., Superintendent