



**FERN RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 28J**  
School Board Meeting Minutes

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**REGULAR MEETING of the FERN RIDGE SCHOOL BOARD**

**March 16, 2026**

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

**CALL TO ORDER (Agenda Item 1):** The regular meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

In attendance were Directors WC Grover, Kathleen Pizzola, Brian Kirkpatrick, Lisa McCann, Mark Gent and Superintendent Gary Carpenter.

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.

There is an opportunity for citizen comment tonight, and the Board looks forward to hearing from those who signed up. I will share some reminders when we get to that portion of the meeting.

Also, please note that all Board meetings are live streamed and posted on the School Board area of the website.

**CITIZENSHIP AWARD (Agenda Item 2):** The March Citizenship Award was presented to Fern Ridge Middle School student Alexa Jimenez.

**FLAG SALUTE (Agenda Item 3):** fern Ridge Middle School student Alexa Jimenez led the flag salute.

**PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Item 4):** The Fern Ridge School Board encourages public input. A person wanting to provide public comment will need to complete and submit an Intent to Speak form to the Board secretary by 1:00 pm on the day of the board meeting.

Public comment is limited to this place on the agenda not to exceed a total of 30 minutes for all commenters. A person giving public comment is limited to an established time limit of (4) four minutes. While speakers may, during public meetings, offer objective criticism of school operations and programs, the Board will not hear personal complaints concerning district personnel nor against any person connected with the school system.

- Community member Jesseca Colwell spoke on school actions and keeping our children safe.

#### **MONTHLY ITEMS (Agenda Item 5):**

**5. A. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the regular school board meeting on February 23, 2026 were presented for approval.

Director Kirkpatrick moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on February 23, 2026, seconded by Director Pizzola. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

#### **BUSINESS OFFICE (Agenda Item 6):**

**6. A. Enrollment Report:** Business Manager Quanah Bennett reviewed the enrollment report as of March 1, 2026. Elmira Elementary has an average class size of 23.6 and Veneta Elementary is at 22.14. Total elementary enrollment is at 570. The middle school has 311 students enrolled. The high school has 359. Overall our in-district enrollment is down 44 below our budgeted number.

**6. B. General Fund Revenue and Expenditure Report:** Business Manager Quanah Bennett reviewed the general fund revenue and expenditure report as of February 28, 2026. The district has received 83% of our budgeted revenue which was 80% this time last year and spent 51% of our budgeted expenses, which was 52% at this time last year. Our revenue indicates a large increase since the beginning fund balance was recorded.

Director Pizzola moved to approve the general fund and expenditure report for January 31, 2026, seconded by Director Kirkpatrick. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

#### **REPORTS (Agenda Item 7):**

**7. A. Contract Award for Fern Ridge Middle School Interior Renovations:** We skipped to item 7.B. to wait for Scott to connect remotely via Zoom. We circled back with Scott Rose directly after item 7.B.

Scott Rose presented the Fern Ridge Middle School interior renovations that will begin May of 2026. There was a time of discussion about GBC Construction, LLC and their references and experience.

Director McCann moved to approve the bid from GBC Construction for contract award for Fern Ridge Middle School Interior Renovations, seconded by Director Pizzola. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

**7. B. Elmira Elementary School Presentation:** Principal Billie Perrier presented slides to highlight Elmira Elementary School's programs and initiatives. A select group of students demonstrated some of the reading techniques that are part of the classroom instruction for literacy.

**7. C. Fern Ridge Education Association:** Certified Union President, Jennifer Snider presented appreciations for each school building and their activities. She announced the Papas Pizza fundraiser to help fund the scholarship amount from OSEA and FREA occurring on the upcoming Wednesday. Then DesiRae Wright-Rendon gave the Legislative update regarding SB 1507 that helped lessen the budget gap. DesiRae will have an update from the OEA RA on April 17th and 18th.

**7. D. Student Representatives:** Student representatives Riley Rice and Jake VanDamme gave updates on Spring Sports upcoming schedules. Outdoor school counselors have had two trainings so far. National Honor Society gained volunteer hours during blood drive. Leadership has a new advisor and is fitting in nicely while organizing fundraisers.

### **7. E. Superintendent's Report**

- Golf is a club organization so far that may develop into our next year budget if there is enough interest.
- 2026-27 budget feedback and input from each building will be coming in by the end of Spring Break. The Budget will be getting finalized in May.
- Thank you to the folks that participated in the Heart of the Community event, and the organizer, Amy Hand.
- The outside area in the back of the middle school is set to be done the Monday after students are back from Spring Break.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS (Agenda Item 8):**

**8. A. Comics and Graphic Novel Storytelling Elective:** Principal Olivia Johnson presented the outline for the proposed new elective for the 2026-27 school year for Fern Ridge Middle School. There was a time of discussion on student participation in similar electives and how they are graded either pass/no pass or letter grade.

Director McCann moved to approve the new elective at the middle school, comics and graphic novel storytelling for 2026-27 school year, seconded by Director Pizzola.

There was some questions on other electives offered. There was a request to table the motion and to get the list of proposed electives.

Director Gent moved to table it, seconded by Director Kirkpatrick.

The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

**8. B. First Student Contract Renewal:** The First Student renewal contract was presented for approval.

Director McCann moved to approve First Student contract renewal for five years, seconded by Director Pizzola. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

**8. C. Athletic Director:** The full time Athletic Director grades 9-12 position to be added to the

2026-2027 budget was presented for approval.

Director Kirkpatrick moved to approve a fulltime AD at EHS that also supports and assists outside athletic programs, selection C, seconded by Director Pizzola. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

**8. D. Allocate 100K for Irrigation:** The request to give authority to use \$100,000 of bond leftover monies to get started now on irrigation projects district wide.

Director Grover moved to allocate 100K immediately for irrigation improvements, seconded by Director Pizzola.

There was a time of discussion that if the project goes over the amount, then money will be pulled from general fund.

The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

**8. E. Property Behind Elmira Elementary for Ball Fields:** The request to use the property to the west of Elmira Elementary for baseball, softball, and soccer fields was presented.

Director Pizzola moved to make the property behind Elmira Elementary into ball fields, seconded by Director Kirkpatrick.

Director McCann asked if there was anyone with an interest for a different use of that property. The property had always been discussed as a use for sports.

The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

**8. F. Posting of Official Board Agenda Timeline:** The request to have the board agenda packet publicly posted 3 business days before the meeting was presented.

Director McCann moved to post the agenda packet on Wednesday before the meeting, seconded by Director Gent. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes and Kirkpatrick voting no. 4-1.

**8. G. First Reading of Proposed 2026-2027 Calendar:** A first reading of the 2026-2027 calendar was presented for review.

**8. H. First Reading of Proposed Policy Updates:** A first reading was held on the following proposed administrative rule and policy updates:

**KG AR DELETE** Use of District Properties, and  
**KG AR REPLACE** Community Use of District Facilities

**8. I. Second Reading of Proposed Policy Updates:** A second reading was held on the following proposed administrative rule and policy updates:

**CB update** Superintendent,  
**EBC NEW** Emergency Plan and First Aid,

**EBC/EBCA R delete** Emergency Procedures and Disaster Plans,  
**EBCB update** Emergency Procedure Drills and Instruction,  
**JECA update** Admission of Resident Students,  
**JGA update** Corporal Punishment, and  
**LBEA update** Denial for Virtual Public Charter School Student Enrollment.

There was a motion to approve all of the policies together.

Director Pizzola moved to approve the policies as presented, seconded by Director McCann. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Grover, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, McCann and Gent voting yes. 5-0.

## **PERSONNEL (Agenda Item 9):**

### **9. A. Licensed Employees Resignations/New hires/Transfers/Other:**

**9. A.1.** Resignation of Kailee Nienhaus, 1.0 FTE Elementary Teacher at Elmira Elementary School, effective June 12, 2026, Resignation of Keeley Green, 1.0 FTE Elementary Teacher at Elmira Elementary School, effective June 12, 2026, and Resignation of Chloe Anderson, 1.0 FTE Elementary Teacher at Elmira Elementary School, effective June 12, 2026.

Director Pizzola moved to approve the three licensed resignations, new hires, transfers, other as proposed, seconded by Director McCann. There was no discussion. The motion carried with Directors Gent, Kirkpatrick, Pizzola, Grover and McCann voting yes. 5-0.

**9. B. Non-Licensed Personnel Report:** The non-licensed personnel report was presented for review:

#### Resignations/Retirements

1. None at this time.

#### New Hires/Transfers

1. Hiring of McKenzie Lyon, 7.0 Instructional Assistant at Elmira High School, effective March 2, 2026.

#### Other

1. None at this time.

#### Coaches

1. Hiring of Ken Best, Track Meet Data Coordinator at Elmira High School, effective March 2, 2026.

## **LATE ITEMS/CLOSING COMMENTS/BOARD COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Agenda Item 10):**

- Director Gent would like to look at more alternatives to the K-2 / 3-5 Reconfiguration. There was a time of discussion to summarize the solutions that have been investigated.
- Director McCann spoke about the Elmira High School CTE tour.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS (Agenda Item 11):**

March 20: NO SCHOOL  
March 23-27: Spring Break  
April 2: End of 3rd Quarter  
April 3: NO SCHOOL  
April 14: 6:30pm First Budget Committee Meeting

**Elmira Elementary:**

March 17: 6pm PTA  
April 9: 6:30pm Outdoor School Info Night  
April 16: Parent Teacher Conferences  
April 17: NO SCHOOL

**Veneta Elementary:**

March 11: 6pm Heart of the Community  
April 4: 11am Easter Egg Hunt  
April 13: 5:30pm PALS  
April 16: Parent Teacher Conferences  
April 17: NO SCHOOL  
April 18: 4pm Auction

**Fern Ridge Middle School:**

March 19: Parent Teacher Conferences-evening only  
April 8: 6pm Staff vs. Student Basketball Game

**Elmira High School:**

March 18: 9-12 Job/Career Fair  
March 19: Parent Teacher Conferences-evening only

**ADJOURNMENT (Agenda Item 12):** Board Chair Grover adjourned the meeting at 7:46 pm.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
School Board Representative

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Gary E. Carpenter, Jr., Superintendent