

School board sets tone for the upcoming year

By Zach Silva
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Board works on coming together as a team, collective values

After an emotional first day of the South Lane School District (SLS) school board retreat, day two saw the conversation focusing on the board's mission and role in the district.

The second four-hour special session of the week, Thursday's conversation started with reviewing South Lane and 4J's mission statements to see the parts that stood out to them. Working in pairs, they were instructed to focus on first finding the themes that the board should be focused on before getting caught up in specifics of the language being used.

There are currently three parts to the SLS mission statement that state "children come first;" "children learn best when they want to be at school;" and

"decision making is student centered." The themes that were reiterated by the board last week echoed what is already in place and focused on the idea of learning and growing; respect and care; children first and that motivation matters.

"There have been times when we've been faced with hard decisions and it was good to fall back on children first as a reason to give people why we made this decision. It was because we have that in mind first," said board member Tammy Hodgkinson during a discussion.

The board then focused their attention on value statements that went over ideas of care, respect, continual learning, ba-

language used before anything is officially changed.

During the second half of the meeting, the conversation shift-

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-Board member Tammy Hodgkinson

sic needs, safety, security and dedicated staff members. The conversation about mission statement and guiding beliefs are currently in the early steps of the process. The board will be receiving input about and working on the details of the

ed to looking at how any authority the board has is as a collective and not as individuals. And especially not as individuals just out in the district.

"I get this argument a lot across the state, it's like, 'Well, Steve, I'm a board member, I'm

privity to that information.' No, you're not," said Steve Kelley the Director of Board Development for the Oregon School Boards Association. "It goes back to... as an individual board member you have no authority."

Different situations were then discussed such as how to get an item on the agenda, communication with the superintendent and a reminder of the nature of board meetings.

"It's a meeting in public, it's not a meeting with the public," said Kelley in regards to public comment at meetings. He also reminded that meetings are not open forums for the audience to join in on the conversation.

General ways of carrying oneself in meetings, with a focus on body language, were discussed

with a reminder that the board sets an example for the rest of the district. "If you can have a good debate where the opinions and different perspectives are out there and you make a decision and you can all support it, that is the heartbeat of an effective board," said Kelley. "And it's when you are passionately in two different camps - not in things that matter a little bit to you or things that are milquetoast - it's when you're adamantly in two different camps and you can show the public that you can have the right conversation and then support the decision afterward."

At the conclusion of the meeting, the board then went on a tour of the new Harrison Elementary School.

Some fire restrictions lifted

Cooler temperatures have allowed Lane County Parks to lessen some fire restrictions placed last week. Now, campers at Richardson Campground on Fern Ridge Reservoir and Camp Lane on Highway 126 are allowed to have campfires in already established fire pits.

Due to the continuing risk of fire in our area, Lane County Parks will still be enforcing these restrictions at several parks:

- No open flames are allowed in Lane County parks, including no campfires, warming fires, cooking fires or ceremonial fires unless noted otherwise in this press release.

- Gas-powered barbeques and cooking stoves using liquid or bottled fuels are allowed where restrictions prohibit campfires, but are restricted to use for cooking purposes only.

- Open flames are prohibited at day use areas in Lane County parks.

- Tobacco use and vaping are already prohibited in Lane County parks.

- Any other spark-emitting operation not specifically mentioned is prohibited.

Not included in these restrictions are coastal Lane County parks located west of milepost 18 on Highway 126, including Archie Knowles Campground and Harbor Vista Campground.

Lane County will continue to monitor weather conditions, to determine if further restrictions become necessary.

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