

**Q&A** *from A6*

way our small town supports each other in times of trouble. We can shift that energy to support the kids in our community when we are not in crisis and help create good citizens that we want to grow up and move in next door.

The school board members also play a role in running the business of the district. I value the employees in our district and want to make sure that the district is a good employer by supporting a culture of excellence.

Doing the right thing by kids and staff is not an "either/or" and both are a priorities of mine.

**Erik Benson:**

My priorities would be to support teachers and employees with additional opportunities for training and compensation to attract the best for the available position. South Lane School District has attracted outstanding teachers and this needs to continue, with the students realizing the success from this continued initiative.

The students are the future employees and innovators of the rapidly changing workplace and overall economy. This needs to be balanced with the financial limitations of the existing budget and projections go-

ing forward.

**2. What do you think the financial priorities of the district ought to be?**

**Taylor Wilhour:**

SLSD has gained significant additional funding, first from the SSA and then from the federal COVID relief bills and we need to use those dollars to maximum effect. Our new superintendent and the classified staff (EAs, food service, bus drivers, etc.) struck a deal to fix the outdated pay schedule and we will uphold our end of that bargain, hopefully sooner than we originally agreed. Lastly, our financial reserves are at the bottom end of what is recommended so we need to increase that to be better prepared for the unexpected.

**Pam Duffy:**

Much of a district's budget is dictated by the state. Total funds budget for 2021-2023 being proposed by the Governor is \$9,100,000,000. How much of these funds will be directed to the South Lane School District? Funding for Career and Technical Education is essential today as not every student's career path demands a four-year college degree. As a new member of the school board, I will have much to learn in relation to the district's budget, but my hope is to have funds directed towards this avenue and to have local business participation.

**Melanie Stuhlmler:**

Financially, I feel, our district priorities should aim towards establishing safe and equitable schools, maintaining assets and increasing academic supports.

**Sherry Duerst-Higgins:**

To help our students navigate back to the classroom and their new environment and to help them with the impact the pandemic has had on student learning, the need to invest in our schools has never been greater. The Student Success Act funds will have a huge impact to

close the K-12 education gaps. We also will be given COVID funds to help in the transition back to school.

We also will be using Measure 98 funds to provide students with the skills, knowledge and training necessary to succeed in future careers to be lifelong learners. The legislature's current budget proposals for the state school fund falls \$500 million short of what it will cost Oregon schools to maintain operations at the same levels as the last budget. If the proposed level of funding does not increase, it will impact our staffing and programs, and it will hurt the education of our students.

**Colleen Valley:**

I believe the district must set a realistic budget. Making sure we are on solid financial ground, using funds to support our mission, serving kids and supporting employees with a living wage.

**Erik Benson:**

Financial priorities should begin with competitive teacher and employee salaries to attract the best staff.

Expand family resource services to support students and families this could benefit. Look for additional revenue from viable sources that were allocated for education to include the intent of the Elliott State Forest as a long-time resource for education.

**3. What opportunities/obligations do you think the district has in providing CTE (Career and Technical Education) to students?**

**Taylor Wilhour:**

CTE has always been a priority for South Lane but some of the programs we had when I first toured the district in 2013 have faced cuts or been shuttered completely due to years of state and federal underfunding. The SSA gives us the opportunity to revive and revamp those programs, like wood shop at Lincoln Middle School, and to create new ones. Everyone I know in education was excited about the work we were doing and then COVID hit, forcing us to change direction and reducing the SSA funding to a fraction what was expected. We are all looking forward to getting back to this work as soon as we can.

**Pam Duffy:**

Career and Technical Education is essential these days. The opportunities are there. I feel the district could tap into local businesses to partner in providing such training.

**Melanie Stuhlmler:**

I believe that the most important thing graduates should leave high school with is job skills. I would like to see local trades be more integrated into the CTE program.

**Sherry Duerst-Higgins:**

Career and Technical Education are vital to our students. South Lane will have CTE programs that focus on career courses that empha-

size technical, academic and career knowledge and skills acquired in applied career context. These skills will insure better high school graduation rates and improve high school graduates' readiness for college and career, to have our graduates ready for the next steps.

Measure 98 funds will provide students the technical skills, knowledge and training necessary to be successful after they graduate. CTE introduces the student to the workforce, providing hands-on opportunities to work with our business partners, in the classroom, with experience in technical skills, and with the opportunity to job shadow and have an internship, with the exposure of what careers are available to them. These skills will increase graduation rates and improve graduate's readiness for college and career.

**Colleen Valley:**

CTE is a fantastic opportunity for kids to get hands-on learning opportunities. I support bringing schools and business together. It makes for a stronger community bond and better outcomes for kids.

**Erik Benson:**

The opportunities continue to offer Career and Technical Education to students and will likely expand as new technologies come into existence and current occupations diminish in percentage of workforce participation or become obsolete. This effort needs to be coordinated with the community colleges in particular. Cottage Grove has had a consistent flow of students into the military and this has resulted in success for those that choose this option, resulting in students receiving excellent skills and vocational training opportunities. This option also provides the opportunity for most individuals at the end of their service obligation, the funding and support to complete a four-year degree program.

**4. The South Lane School District has a stated goal to create "equitable schools." What does this mean to you and how should the board approach it?**

**Taylor Wilhour:**

Equity is about leveling the playing field for people who face additional obstacles to success, whether it be poverty, discrimination, cultural and/or language barriers, etc., and fostering a culture that welcomes all students regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status. The extraordinary efforts of SLSD admin and staff to provide technology and meals to students over the last year are a great example of equity work making a difference right here in CG.

SLSD was already putting together a panel to study equity issues in our schools and look for improvements before the 2020 protests began. While their work is still in its early stages, the decision to start by reaching

out to students to be a major part of that effort was a great one. It's a great decision because students see and experience prejudice and discrimination in ways that are hidden from staff and administrators and, after all, Kids Come First.

**Pam Duffy:**

Equitable schools or equity in education means all students receive the resources needed to graduate prepared for success after high school. The students should have the knowledge and skills to succeed as contributing members of society regardless of race, gender, English proficiency, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or disability. The board can approach equality in education by working with district staff to provide a high-level curriculum, ensuring the qualification of teachers, reviewing overall discipline rates and monitoring the district's progress.

**Melanie Stuhlmler:**

Equitable schools offer an education that allows every student the same opportunity to learn. Breaking away from "one-way fits all" traditions, equitable schools invite culture, diversity, and equality into the classroom. Skills and concept knowledge is measured through performance-based assessments and applied learning. To establish equitable schools, the board should form a team to identify what funding is needed, establish trainings and collaborations, and create appropriate practices/policies.

**Sherry Duerst-Higgins:**

A school culture of equity is achieved when student excellence and success is the norm for every student and staff. The school climate provides equitable resources and instruction for each student to ensure successful academic outcome for all and to perform at the highest level. The district is putting systems in place to ensure that all our students have been given an equal chance for success, accommodating learning styles and disability.

We must be mindful and deliberate in creating an equitable culture, having a shared vision and language, hiring a diverse staff to reflect the students we are working with and as a board setting policy and goals for equity throughout South Lane and proving the district with our support.

**Colleen Valley:**

To me, equitable schools look like places where all kids get a fair chance. Some kids come from backgrounds that don't give them the support they need to be successful in schools. That looks different for every child. Meeting kids where they are and implementing support to bring them to a place where they can learn and benefit from their time in schools is key.

**Erik Benson:**


At this point, the South Lane School District has done excellent work in trying to provide opportunity for all students to progress towards graduation and overall success. This comes with the understanding that there are obstacles to success, with parents economically challenged due to the virus, single-parent households with little outside support, homelessness and other challenges that hinder student progress.

More can be done and needs to be done with the resources available and exploring other programs that may be available or in development.

**Note:** Ballots for the May 18 Special Election are expected to begin arriving as early as today. Those who plan to vote by mail should plan to return their ballot no later than May 10 to assure their ballot arrives in time.



David Debysingh, R.Ph.




Mike Hankins, R.Ph.

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# Worship Directory

COTTAGE GROVE:	First Presbyterian Church	St. Andrews Episcopal Church
<p><b>6th &amp; Gibbs Church of Christ</b> 195 N. 6th St. • 541-942-3822 10:00am Christian Education: Pre-K through 5th Tim Baker, Senior Minister www.6thandgibbs.com</p>	<p>3rd and Adams St 541-942-4479 Rev.: Karen Hill Worship: 10:00am Sunday School: 10:00am fpcgrove.com</p>	<p>1301 W. Main • 541-767-9050 Rev. Lawrence Crumb "Scripture, Tradition, Reason" Worship: Sunday 10:30am All Welcome</p>
<p><b>Calvary Baptist Church</b> 77873 S 6th St • 541-942-4290 Pastor: Riley Hendricks Sunday School: 9:45am Worship: 11:00am The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm Praying Thru Life: Wednesday 6:00pm</p>	<p><b>Hope Fellowship</b> United Pentecostal Church 100 S. Gateway Blvd. 541-942-2061 Pastor: Dave Bragg Worship: 11:00am Sunday Bible Study: 7:00pm Wednesday www.hopefellowshipupcc.com</p>	<p><b>Seventh-day Adventist Church</b> 820 South 10th Street 541-942-5213 Pastor: James D. Boram Bible Study: Saturday, 9:15 am Worship Service: Saturday, 10:40 Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 1:00</p>
<p><b>Church of Christ</b> 420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565 Sunday Service: 10:30am</p>	<p><b>Living Faith Assembly</b> 467 S. 10th St. • 541-942-2612 Worship Services Sundays: 9a &amp; 11a Youth Worship Sundays: 11a (all ages welcome) Mondays: 5:30p (6th-12th grades)</p>	<p><b>Trinity Lutheran Church</b> 6th &amp; Quincy • 541-942-2373 Pastor: James L. Markus Sunday School &amp; Adult Education 9:15am Sunday Worship 10:30 am Comm. Kitchen Free Meal Tue &amp; Thur 5:00pm TLC Groups tlccg.com</p>
<p><b>Cottage Grove Bible Church</b> 1200 East Quincy Avenue 541-942-4771 Pastor: Bob Singer Worship 11am Sunday School: 9:45am AWANA age 3-8th Grade, Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm www.cg bible.org</p>	<p><b>Non-Denominational Church of Christ</b> 1041 Pennoyer Ave 541-942-8928 Preacher: Tony Martin Sunday Bible Study: 10:00am Sunday Worship: 10:50am &amp; 5:30pm www.pennoyeravecc.com</p>	<p><b>United Methodist Church</b> 334 Washington 541-942-3033 Worship 10am umcgrove.org</p>
<p><b>Cottage Grove Faith Center</b> 33761 Row River Rd. 541-942-4851 Lead Pastor: Kevin Prueft www.cg4.tv Full Children's Ministry available Services: 9:00am &amp; 10:45am</p>	<p><b>Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Benizi Catholic Churches</b> 1025. N. 19th St. 541-942-3420 Father John J. Boyle Holy Mass: Saturday Vigil - 5:30 pm Sunday - 10:30 am For weekday and Holy Day of Obligation schedule see website QIPHCG.net Confession: 4 PM to 5 PM Saturdays or by appointment St. Philip Benizi, Creswell 552 Holbrook Lane Sunday 8 am</p>	<p><b>"VICTORY" Country Church</b> 913 S. 6th Street • 541-942-5913 Pastor: Barbara Dockery Worship Service: 10:00am Message: "WE BELIEVE IN MIRACLES"</p>
<p><b>Delight Valley Church of Christ</b> 33087 Saginaw Rd. East 541-942-7711 • Pastor: Bob Friend Two Services: 9am - Classic in the Chapel 10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium</p>		<p><b>CRESWELL:</b> <b>Creswell Presbyterian Church</b> 75 S 4th S • 541-895-3419 Rev. Seth Wheeler Adult Sunday School 9:15am Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am website www.creswellpres.org</p>



Our Worship Directory is a weekly feature.  
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