

## Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER** Board Chair Kottkey called the business meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone; she then led the pledge of allegiance. The following were in attendance:

**Board of Directors**

Kristy Kottkey, Chair  
Alma Lozano, Vice Chair  
Kate Grandusky  
Peter Truax  
Brisa Franco  
Maya Andrade, Student Representative

**Staff**

Suzanne West, Superintendent  
Arturo Lomeli, Assistant Superintendent  
Kim Shearer, Director of Student Services  
Ilean Clute, Director of Finance (absent)  
Enrique Pinon, Technology Manager (absent)  
David Warner, Director of Communications  
Sarah Hamlin, Director of Human Resources  
Bethany Magnuson, Executive Assistant

**PRELIMINARIES**

**Approval of the Agenda**

Director Grandusky moved to approve the agenda as presented, Vice Chair Lozano seconded and the agenda was approved.

**CONSENT**

- 2025-107 MOTION: Director Grandusky moved to approve the consent agenda, Director Franco seconded, unanimously carried with a vote of 5-0.
- Item 1: Board Minutes of the May 27, 2025 School Board meeting.
- Item 2: Personnel
- New hires
    - 8/25/25 - Aiayana Turner Flores - 1.0 FTE - 7th/8th Grade DL Spanish Language Arts Teacher - NAMS
    - 8/25/25 - Alfonso Echeverria - 1.0 FTE - Mental Health Specialist - FGHS
    - 8/25/25 - Devianne Taylor - 1.0 FTE - Mental Health Specialist - NAMS & CALC
    - 8/25/25 - Jordan Loucks - 1.0 FTE - Special Education Teacher - NAMS
    - 8/25/25 - Monica Graves-Fernandez - 1.0 FTE - Health Sciences Anatomy/Medical Term. Teacher - FGHS
    - 8/25/25 - Nadxieelii Chavez-Vazquez - 1.0 FTE - Dual Language Teacher 5th Grade - TM-West
    - 8/25/25 - Troy Hoppenrath - 1.0 FTE - Special Education Teacher - Oak Grove Academy
    - 8/25/25 - Anayeli Manriquez Gonzalez - 1.0 FTE - High School Social Studies/ELD Teacher - FGHS
    - 8/25/25 - Allison Cooper - 1.0 FTE - Dual Language Teacher 6th Grade - TM-West
  - Temporary Hires

8/25/25 - Benjamin Torrens - 1.0 FTE - 7th/8th Grade Alternative Education Classroom - NAMS  
8/25/25 - Jenny Mai-Hur - 1.0 FTE - Licensed School Psychologist - TBD  
8/25/25 - Julissa Chacon Lopez - 1.0 FTE - Bilingual Teacher 3rd Grade - ES  
8/25/25 - Sienna Lochtie - 1.0 FTE - Elementary School Counselor - Temporary 1st Semester - FH  
8/25/25 - Midori Erwin - 1.0 FTE - Dual Language 3rd Grader Teacher - CO  
8/25/25 - Stephanie Whitmore - 1.0 FTE - District Nurse - RN - TM-West  
8/04/25 - Theresa McElligott - 1.0 FTE - Interim Middle School Principal - NAMS  
8/06/25 - Rebecca Rios - 1.0 FTE - Interim Assistant Principal - TMUES

#### Leaves of Absence

2025-2026 - Peggy Ancell - 0.5 FTE - ELD Teacher - ES  
2025-2026 - Angela Crisman - 0.5 FTE - Mental Health Specialist - TM-West

#### Resignations

7/24/25 - Alaina Santana - 1.0 FTE - Literacy Coordinator - District Office

Item 3: Accounts Payable ending June 30, 2025 and July 31, 2025

## OATH OF OFFICE

Chair Kottkey administered the Oath of Office to Maya Andrade, Student Representative to the School Board for the 2025-2026 school year. Maya Andrade accepted and completed the Oath of Office.

## ACTION

### Special School Contracted Services

Presented by Dr. Kimberly Shearer, Director of Student Services

Student Services is requesting School Board approval of contracted services for a special school placement at Clackamas County Educational Services District, Heron Creek in the amount of \$175,360 from September 2025 through June 30, 2025. This request supports a student's specific educational needs, as identified through their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This agency was selected due to the unavailability of our current local service plan options with the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRESA) and other placement options. The contracted service agreement, including costs and provider details, is outlined in the accompanying documentation for your review. Approval of this request will ensure the student receives the necessary specialized instruction and support in compliance with federal and state laws.

2025-108 MOTION: Director Truax moved to approve the contracted services for a special school placement at Clackamas County ESD in the amount of \$175,360 from September 2025 through June 30, 2025, Director Grandusky seconded, unanimously carried with a vote of 5-0.

### Contracted Staffing Services

Presented by Dr. Kimberly Shearer, Director of Student Services

The district has a need to fill an open 1.0 FTE SLP position to cover current budgeted positions. We have had a budgeted 1.0 position open and have not received any applicants.

Student Services is requesting board action to spend up to \$133,950 for the 25-26 school year on

hiring availability and contract negotiations with a qualified contracted service agency. The estimated total cost of this contracted service for 1.0 FTE would be \$133,950 for the 25-26 school year. This cost is comprehensive and would include salary and benefits. Currently budgeted FTE would be converted to cover the contracted services.

2025-109 MOTION: Director Grandusky moved to approve spending up to \$133,950 for a 1.0 FTE Speech Language Pathology position that is vacant in Student Services for the 2025-2026 school year, Vice Chair Lozano seconded, unanimously carried with a vote of 5-0.

Forest Grove High School Boiler Replacement

Presented by Dr. Suzanne West, Superintendent on behalf of Ilean Clute, Director of Finance The Forest Grove School District is working through the HVAC related Bond projects. As a part of this, the FGHS Boilers are scheduled to be replaced.

Forest Grove High School has three gas fired condensing hot water boilers serving the heating systems and are often in need of repairs. The units are at their expected useful life by ASHRAE standards. The recommendation is to replace the boilers with three new Aerco condensing boilers including current technology for efficiency, redundancy, and reliability.

Attached are 2 quotes, one for the equipment and one for the installation. These are both through Daikin utilizing the Omnia Co-Operative agreement.

Total Purchase \$569,135

Equipment \$228,050

Labor \$341,085

This project will be completed in September 2025

2025-110 MOTION: Director Truax moved to approve the purchase agreements with Daikin Applied for the replacement of the boilers and piping associated with them for \$569,135 utilizing Bond funds, Vice Chair Lozano seconded, unanimously carried with a vote of 5-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

**BOARD RETREAT**

**CALL TO ORDER** Board Chair Kottkey called the Board Retreat meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

**Board of Directors**

Kristy Kottkey, Chair  
Alma Lozano, Vice Chair  
Kate Grandusky  
Peter Truax

**Staff**

Suzanne West, Superintendent  
Arturo Lomeli, Assistant Superintendent  
Kim Shearer, Director of Student Services  
Ilean Clute, Director of Finance (absent)

Brisa Franco  
Maya Andrade, Student Representative

Enrique Pinon, Technology Manager (absent)  
David Warner, Director of Communications  
Sarah Hamlin, Director of Human Resources  
Bethany Magnuson, Executive Assistant

Chair Kottkey outlined the purpose of the retreat: to strengthen collaboration between the Board and Cabinet team, review district progress, and set goals for the 2025–26 school year.

- Introduction of Facilitator
  - a. Christy Perry, consultant and former Oregon superintendent was introduced.
  - b. Perry shared her background: 18 years as a superintendent across both small (Dallas, Oregon) and large districts (Salem-Keizer).
  - c. Perry emphasized that district effectiveness is strongly tied to governance quality, noting that taking time for retreats helps orient new members and reset goals.
    - The power of board governance in having a highly effective district cannot be understated. You make or break the experience for the superintendent, community, and students in the district.
    - Interrupted leadership over time impacts student outcomes.
- Introductions to board members with three questions.
  - a. When are you at your best in a meeting?
    - Lozano: When there is listening first and we can all share a conversation, instead of a quick reaction to something that is happening.
    - Kottkey: When we're tackling something controversial and difficult because I'm excited that it leads to change that we need.
    - Andrade: When everyone is listening, offering different ideas, and coming up with creative solutions.
    - Grandusky answered, in the morning or after a short nap, when I have the materials ahead of time and I'm prepared and when everyone else is prepared.
    - Franco answered, in an environment I feel welcome in.
    - Truax answered, where there is preparation and mutual respect.
    - West answered, when we take a listening stance from a position of curiosity. Respectful behavior even during hard conversations.
  - b. What is one thing your board colleagues don't know about you?
    - Grandusky: I've been ice skating since I was three years old and I still ice skate at 76 years old.
    - Franco: I have a love and fascination with animals, especially a cow.
    - Kottkey: I was asked to be a fish influencer and give feedback about fish at Burgerville.
    - West: I practice several different martial arts.
    - Lozano: I love to run.
    - Andrade: I love learning new languages and make a goal of learning new words in new languages.
    - Truax: Before I got into education I worked in radio journalism.
  - c. What super power do you have that will be an asset to the Forest Grove School District?
    - West: Being able to listen deeply and pull out from a conversation those things that really matter to the individual and find a path forward.
    - Truax: Being able to not hurt people during meetings he's attending (jokingly).

- Lozano: Listening and putting self in person's shoes before speaking and sharing opinions.
- Franco: Fairly friendly, making friends, approachable.
- Andrade: Looking for change
- Grandusky: Passionate about children having access to books. Advocates for students to read and have access to books. If you want to learn to read and read well you need a good functioning library.
- Kottkey: Always thinking about millions of ideas and always thinking about what we need to do better.
- d. Directed to Cabinet. What conditions at a school board meeting allow you to be at your best?
  - Warner: The environment should be open, a listening environment, respectful of each other, and put ourselves in each other's shoes.
  - Shearer: Appreciates it when board members are curious versus judgemental.
  - Lomeli: Sense of partnership.
  - Hamlin: Partnership, being clear with any requests, suggestions, or guidance so we know what you are looking for and can better respond.
- Characteristics of Highly Effective Boards
  - a. Perry introduced research-based characteristics of high-functioning boards:
    - Shared governance norms.
    - Clarity of board versus administrative roles.
    - Consistency in decision-making and communication.
    - Alignment of board goals with superintendent evaluation.
- What Makes a High-Functioning School Board?
  - 1.) Shared Focus on Student Learning
    - a.) Prioritize student achievement and equity
    - b.) Adopt a Strategic plan
    - c.) Focus on outcomes, not just operations.
      - i.) Write down what would this look like in a board meeting to be consistently focused on student learning?
  - 2.) Strong Superintendent-Board partnership
    - a.) Clear roles and mutual trust
    - b.) The board governs; the superintendent manages
    - c.) Evaluate the superintendent using established goals and metrics
  - 3.) Collaborative, Respectful Board Culture
    - a.) Build trust, manage conflict constructively, maintain professionalism
    - b.) Model civility and put district needs above personal agendas
    - c.) Disagree respectfully and unite behind decisions once made
  - 4.) Use of Data and Accountability
    - a.) Use student performance, equity data, and financial indicators
    - b.) Hold themselves and superintendent accountable for progress
    - c.) Transparent data sharing builds trust with the community
  - 5.) Continuous Learning and Development
    - a.) Engage in professional development, equity training, and governance retreats.
    - b.) Conduct self-assessments to improve performance
    - c.) Stay informed on education trends and best practices

6.) Authentic Community Engagement

- a.) Engage the community strategically to inform priorities
- b.) Use structured methods of engagement
- c.) Be transparent with the community about decision of the board
- d.) Create clear protocols for engagement and listening.

a. Individual Reflections:

- Grandusky: Shared that she has never completed a self-assessment as a board member. She recommended adopting both mid-year and end-of-year self-assessments to strengthen accountability and team growth. She noted this practice could help the Board identify collective strengths and gaps.
- Franco: Reflected that she resonated most with the theme of engaging the community. She acknowledged difficulty in connecting with community members but expressed passion for finding more welcoming and inclusive ways to bring families into district discussions, including making meetings more accessible.
- Lozano: Spoke as both a parent and a graduate of Forest Grove. She emphasized the importance of better community engagement, noting that many homeowners and parents in the system are not connected to district activities. She underscored that “education starts at home, not in the schools.”
- Truax: Drew from his experience as a middle and high school teacher for 28 years, followed by work as a teacher evaluator. He reflected on the importance of understanding the building blocks of education, especially how early elementary instruction impacts long-term student outcomes. Perry clarified that Truax’s emphasis was on wanting to learn and apply those foundational “building blocks” to board work.
- Kottkey: Reflected on her past experience where board members operated in silos, which led to uneven access to information. She stressed the importance of strong communication and a healthy board-superintendent partnership. Kotke also supported regular self-assessment and proposed that the Board agree to proactively resolve disagreements: *“If we have a disagreement during a board meeting, let’s have a coffee date afterward to work it out.”*
- Andrade: Shared her commitment to ongoing learning and development. She emphasized being open to constructive criticism and using it as a tool for growth.
- West: Highlighted curiosity as a guiding value, stressing the importance of asking questions before making judgments or decisions. She described authentic community engagement as a “nut we need to crack” and admitted uncertainty about the best approach. She advised board members to “walk softly but carry a big stick,” noting that their position carries influence that must be exercised with care.
- Perry affirmed the value of these reflections and noted that they collectively highlighted themes of accountability, communication, curiosity, and authentic community engagement. Shared 2024-25 Board Goals and the way we are supporting the district with Board Goals. She asked the board to come up with a governance goal. They will discuss governance versus support of the strategic plan.

Recess at 10:28 a.m.

Recess ended at 10:35 a.m.

- Superintendent's Reflections and Goals
  - Perry shifted the retreat to Superintendent West's reflections on the past year, her vision for the district, and draft goals for 2025–26. Perry reminded board members to deeply listen, ask questions for understanding, and then provide feedback once clarity was achieved.
  - West began by grounding her reflections in her personal philosophy: she is driven by continual improvement and a deep passion for educational work. She emphasized her discomfort with inefficient systems that do not serve students, families, or staff well. Instead, she prefers to dig into challenges, analyze root causes, and redesign systems to improve outcomes. She noted that current student outcomes largely reflect the system as it has been designed, making systemic work essential.
  - Reflecting on her first year as superintendent, West described it as a “discovery year” where she intentionally set goals focused on learning and building relationships rather than on direct strategic plan implementation. These included:
    - Developing and implementing a regular data monitoring routine.
    - Navigating bargaining processes and maintaining strong district–union relationships.
    - Completing her early action plan of 70 tasks (all were completed).  
Developing progress across evaluation standards.
  - West underscored that while these were foundational, they did not yet explicitly include strategic plan goals. Instead, they were designed to help her understand the district, facilitate relationship-building, and create trust. She thanked cabinet members for their patience as she asked many questions throughout the year.
- Strategic Plan Alignment
  - West outlined the district's Strategic Plan priorities:
    - Instruction and Learning
    - Behavioral Health and Wellness
    - Family and Student Engagement
    - Creating a Resilient Organization
  - West highlighted the urgency of resilience, noting declining or stagnant state revenues and the need for nimble systems that can adapt to change. She then shared draft 2025–26 Superintendent Goals, each aligned with the strategic plan:
  - Goal 1 – Advance Instructional Excellence and Alignment
    - Alignment of coaching, professional learning, and administrator development.
    - Student Panorama survey indicators on belonging and adult connections.
    - Implementation of instructional walkthrough tools to strengthen feedback.
  - Goal 2 – Improve Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes
    - Meet or exceed gap-closing targets in 3rd grade ELA and 8th grade math for focal student groups.
    - Track disaggregated benchmark growth.
    - Increase use of assessment data to inform instruction.
  - Goal 3 – Strengthen Two-Way Communication
    - Track survey indicators on belonging, communication, and access to leadership.
    - Increase participation in multilingual, culturally affirming opportunities.
    - Implement districtwide systems for feedback loops and decision-making.
  - Goal 4 – Ensure Strategic Stewardship of Resources
    - Modernize HR and fiscal systems.

- Complete collective bargaining aligned to goals and relationships.
- Strengthen leadership development, recruitment, and retention.
- West proposed a monitoring schedule (October 2025, January 2026, April 2026, June 2026) to structure accountability and provide the board with progress updates.
- Board Questions and Discussion
  - Goal 1 Discussion – Instructional Excellence
    - Truax asked for a definition of “walkthroughs.” West clarified these are informal, short drop-in observations (~15 minutes) focused on feedback.
    - Franco asked about frequency; West responded that ideally each teacher would experience several per week, though expectations would need discussion with administrators.
    - Grandusky raised concern about systemic outcomes in public education, asking if the district needs “big shifts” rather than small tweaks. West emphasized willingness to disrupt outdated systems, noting education is often slow to change.
    - Perry asked how walkthroughs would be monitored. West described options for public accountability and Cabinet oversight.
    - Kottkey asked about ways beyond surveys to measure teacher empowerment. West suggested combining survey tools (like EVE) with listening sessions.
    - Truax raised concerns about federal attacks on public education and urged legislative advocacy. Christy suggested adding governance goals for advocacy. West acknowledged the tension of protecting classrooms from external politics while engaging with state and federal leaders.
  - Goal 2 Discussion – Literacy and Numeracy
    - Kottkey asked if last year’s data could be summarized again for board context.
    - Franco asked about state testing requirements vs. benchmark data; staff explained both are used, with benchmarks offering more sensitive measures of growth.
    - Grandusky highlighted that limited reading time is insufficient for special education students. Lomeli described shifts toward stronger Tier 1 instruction and better preparation for teachers working with focal groups. Shearer added that teacher assignment decisions now consider experience with struggling readers.
  - Goal 3 Discussion – Two-Way Communication
    - Franco asked about family survey participation; staff acknowledged survey fatigue and identified opportunities to expand access (e.g., QR codes at community events).
    - Truax expressed skepticism of QR codes and suggested face-to-face engagement. He also urged that families who submit surveys receive acknowledgement.
    - Kottkey stressed showing families how their feedback informs decisions.
    - Lozano noted community members often don’t understand what board members do and encouraged board visibility.
    - West described the Superintendent Transition Team and ongoing efforts to create authentic spaces for conversations with families. Lozano emphasized that meeting families where they already are (e.g., back-to-school nights) is key.
  - Goal 4 Discussion – Stewardship of Resources
    - Grandusky praised the business manager for making the budget process more transparent. Suzanne concurred.
    - Kottkey flagged the monitoring schedule for further reflection.

Recess at 12:05 p.m.

Recess ended at 12:42 p.m.

- Monitoring Schedule and Evaluation
  - Discussion turned to how the monitoring schedule aligns with superintendent evaluation:
    - Truax asked whether monitoring reports should occur in public or executive sessions. West clarified that data should remain public, with performance evaluation reserved for executive sessions.
    - Kottkey suggested a mid-year executive session to check alignment. Perry agreed this could be helpful for new members, proposing January 2026 as a touchpoint.
    - Grandusky asked what “staffing” data meant; West explained it would include composition, demographics, and substitute fill rates.
    - Franco asked about professional learning events; West emphasized alignment to district priorities and ongoing staff feedback.
- Board Goals and Purposes
  - The board then reflected on its own goals.
    - Kottkey recalled that previous board goals were not actively monitored and suggested replacing them with governance goals aligned to the superintendent’s work.
    - Grandusky, Lozano, Andrade, and Franco expressed support for aligning board goals with the superintendent’s goals to create clarity and focus.
    - Truax suggested continuing legislative advocacy and using data/analytics. He emphasized the board’s responsibility to oversee both financial and instructional priorities.
    - A general consensus emerged that the board should replace traditional goals with a Board Purpose Statement emphasizing oversight, support for the superintendent, legislative advocacy, and alignment with the strategic plan.
  - West suggested that such a statement, written in plain language, could serve both as an internal compass and as a way to communicate the board’s role to the public. Perry and Kottkey proposed this could function like “working agreements” and evolve over time.
    - The board discussed drafting such a purpose statement, with input from all members, to be revisited after a year.
- Closing Reflections
  - Perry summarized:
    - Superintendent goals and monitoring schedule will guide accountability.
    - The board will consider adopting a purpose statement in place of traditional board goals.
    - Alignment between board governance and superintendent leadership is essential.
  - Perry suggested that for the next meeting, she and West draft a Board Purpose Statement that incorporates specificity and relevant policies. The intent would be for the board to then add contributions from each member, reflecting individual commitments to supporting district work. This proposal was met with agreement, as board members expressed a desire for clarity in how the board’s role connects to the superintendent’s goals and the district’s strategic plan.
- Board Reflections
  - Perry invited board members to share what would give them confidence that the district is moving in the right direction and that they are satisfied with West’s performance as superintendent.

- Grandusky said she looks for continuity of legislative work and visible engagement in the community. She emphasized the importance of trust and respect, noting that West’s conduct, the survey data, and board members’ own observations will help shape her perception.
  - Franco said effective communication and creating space for board processing are critical. She recalled first meeting West at an event at Pacific University and expressed confidence that the goals reflect deep thought and care.
  - Kottkey emphasized the value of trust, which she feels has been built quickly. She added that success comes not only from reaching goals, but also from identifying and articulating where the district needs to go. Clear communication that helps the community feel safe and guided is an important marker of success.
  - West responded that while not every teacher needs to memorize the strategic plan, each teacher must fully understand and implement the instructional framework. “We just need damn good teaching,” she stated, underscoring her belief that effective instruction is the core of student success.
  - Truax reflected that the overall posture of the district has shifted under West’s leadership. Conversations about finances, once focused on worry and concern, are now more optimistic, leading to a more positive outlook on the district overall.
- Closing Reflections
    - Board members and staff shared closing thoughts on the retreat. Common high points included the strong sense of teamwork, hearing diverse perspectives, welcoming new members, and reaffirming the group’s shared dedication to students. Participants valued the opportunity to connect personally in a supportive, non-threatening space and to recognize the unique strengths each member brings.
    - The challenges noted were light-hearted, ranging from discomfort with the food (salad dressing, cookies, lunch choice) to physical discomfort with chairs and the length of sitting. Several members also expressed wishing for more time to continue building relationships and deepening conversations.
    - Overall, the reflections underscored optimism, collegiality, and commitment to moving forward as a cohesive, student-centered board.

Kottkey shared, before we adjourn, I’d like to remind everyone the August 26th board meeting is canceled. Instead, we encourage you to join us for the Cornelius Elementary ribbon cutting and grand opening celebration from 4-6 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

This meeting is adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bethany Magnuson, Executive Assistant

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Kristy Kottkey, Board Chair

Date:\_\_\_\_\_