

Columbia Gorge Community College
The Dalles, OR

DPO Education Caucus Minutes
Sunday, June 12, 2022 10 AM

1. Welcome/Introductions: Meeting was called to order by Kathleen Jeskey at 10:00 AM

Present: Kathleen Jeskey, Scott, Sami, Nancy Lewis, Victoria Long, Sami Al-Abdrabbuh, JoAnn Cummings, Pat Reilly, Carleen Reilly, Jarred Taylor, Susan Heath, Matt West, Charlie Krase, Toby Riffle, Elaine Harris, Larry Ludeking, Brian Gardner, Lee Schlenker

2. Old Business

- **Resolution on Private, For-Profit Charter Schools** Kathleen Jeskey and Scott Hays, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Education Caucus, reported that the Ed Caucus Resolution on the practices of for-profit online charter schools is being forwarded to the State Central Committee this afternoon with a do-pass recommendation from a subcommittee of the Platform and Resolutions Committee (there was no quorum, so PRC cannot endorse the resolution). They explained that two changes were made to the original resolution, but they were acceptable, even if the first was not desirable. That change involved elimination of the second “whereas” statement because it did not match any planks in the 2021 DPO Platform (because the resolution was written before adoption of the new platform). The second change was that the two “therefore” sections in the original resolution were rewritten, but their intent was not changed. A third proposed revision (one that essentially contradicted the purpose and intention of the resolution) was rejected. This resolution will be presented to the SCC for adoption this afternoon, and all delegates are encouraged to vote in favor. There was discussion about the details of the revisions. Sami Al-Abdrabbuh made a motion for the Caucus to endorse the resolution as amended. The motion was seconded. It passed with a unanimous voice vote.

NOTE: The resolution was later adopted unanimously by the SCC (hooray!)

3. New Business

- **Possible initiative petitions being circulated re. School Vouchers and Open Enrollment:** Kathleen announced that a group affiliated with Timber Unity is circulating two initiative petitions for inclusion on the November ballot to which we must pay attention and develop strategies to oppose. One involves initiating statewide open enrollment in public schools, and the second is a school choice amendment that requires funding to follow children wherever they are schooled (private schools, nonpublic online schools, and home school).

- **Important Education Issues for Next Legislative Session (open discussion)**
 - **Hold charter cap :** There was discussion about the nature of the enrollment caps and why it is essential that they be maintained.
 - **Student/staff mental health in schools:** The discussion focused primarily upon threats to the Student Success Act (SSA) and its ability to adequately fund emotional and mental health support for students (and staff). It has come to the attention of the Executive Committee that many legislators see the SSA as a source of funding to backfill funding from the State School Fund (SSF) that is being diverted to other uses. That is not its intention ... the SSF should fund schools to levels recommended by the Quality Education Model, and SSA monies are designed to supplement (not replace) that funding. Contact your legislators and encourage them to support this vision, which in turn will provide support for emotional and mental health services. There was also discussion about the role of the Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) in better serving emotional and mental health needs of students and staff, and the need to encourage all school board members to join the OSBA.
 - **Brian Gardner: Identification of students with learning differences:** Brian spoke briefly about the byzantine nature of identifying students with special needs and the necessity of correcting the problem. Specifically, he distinguished between the difficulty for parents in knowing whether to pursue an IEP or a 504 Plan for their child when they appear to be having difficulties in school. Too many kids who need special accommodation fall between the cracks in these two programs, and their educational needs go unserved. The pandemic has only exacerbated the problem, acting to increase isolation and emotional stress amongst students. He advocates for an independent body to provide early testing for all students to determine if they have issues beyond the officially recognized learning disabilities. He proposed creation of a Covid Task Force to identify social and emotional issues at kindergarten and again possibly in second grade in order to provide appropriate accommodation for all students who need it. He distributed a handout outlining a proposed resolution and answered questions.
 - **Clackamas County/DPO Resolution on Rural youth homelessness:** Kathleen described the Task Force forming in Clackamas County under the leadership of Michael Heyn to form a coalition to promote and support actual legislation to enact provisions of this resolution.

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Disruption and intimidation of school boards

The meeting ended with a general discussion about certain factions that are disrupting school board meetings and/or running for seats on school boards and flipping them to a hostile position on education and learning. Stories were shared about threats to

individual school board members who oppose this faction. The Governor's office is preparing a toolkit for use by school board members to address these threats. It will be released soon. We also spoke about the need to organize people in the neighborhood to oppose these bullies (appropriate use of the Neighborhood Leader Program) by attending and testifying at school board meetings (providing alternative voices), supporting (and voting for) progressive candidates for school boards, or running for school board. With respect to this last alternative, please visit <https://getonboardoregon.org>.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM