

**Minutes**  
**Location: Zoom**

**DPO Education Caucus Minutes**  
**Sunday, Sept. 19, 2021**

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 10 AM by Kathleen Jeskey

**Present:** Laurie Wimmer, Deb Barnes, Mary Thamann, Maureen Barnhart, Carol Greenough, Michelle Morales Walker, Peter Hall, Scott Hays, Brandi Penner, Sami Al-Abdrabbuh, Lisa Stiller, Peter Hall, Merridy McDaniels

**2. Old Business**

- **DPLC Resolution on for profit charter schools:** A committee was formed to draft a resolution to be presented at our next caucus meeting.

**3. New Business**

- **Rep. Courtney Neron on education related legislation in upcoming short session**  
We do not want to not respond in a retaliatory way to school boards but change systemic policy issues that make sure that our Board members are not violating their oaths of office.
- **Redistricting:** Current maps tried to consider communities of common interest and existing boundaries. The committee is trying to make sure that the process is fair. There is a House map, Senate map, and a Congressional map. They are posted in Redistricting Oregon. Process is compressed because of covid. There is a possibility that there will not be agreement on the maps. The process has until Sept. 27 and if there is no agreement Oregon Secretary of State or Oregon Supreme Court will take over and make final decisions on map.  
Question about communities of common interest: What is that? It can be many things: school area, neighborhood, geographic area, church, and communities of color e.g. The Black community which is very small in Oregon.
- **COVID dashboard questions:** Concern about schools COVID dashboards: even teachers don't get notified when a student has been exposed or contracted COVID. FERPA doesn't allow for identification of specific students. Part of the reason things may not be updated regularly is that everyone is short staffed. ODE/OSHA/districts don't want to fire employees who are not vaccinated. Some districts are really making an effort to retain the employees.
- **Q & A with school board members**  
**What's happening:** There is a need for education about the role of school boards. People need to know that violating the law is not something they can or should

do. Specific to BLM, First Amendment and the authority of the governor: Mandates ARE the law as long as the mandate has a statute behind it (like health regulations).

**Calls for action: OSBA/OSBE:** The Oregon School Boards Association wrote the following open letter to Oregon school board members: <http://www.osba.org/-/media/2021-09-10-Boardleaders.pdf?la=en> The Oregon State Board of Education passed the following “Resolution Encouraging Solidarity and Support for Student Identities: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORED/bulletins/2f1a677?fbclid=IwAR296vOQtBQb2y90iactozhBH1bmkyMZCDnrIC98zj2N4XuCrGwSsEw-JyP8>

**General Discussion:** School boards technically are “the boss”. They have broad responsibilities and power. We need to be careful about limiting the powers of school boards as that can harm local control. But at the same time, we need support and accountability.

There are between 80 and 120 school board members of color in Oregon out of 1400. Many board members of color are feeling unsafe and being harassed. In some places, law enforcement is not listening. We need to support our school board members and school administrators, particularly those who are female and/or people of color. We need to make sure those who participate in sexual and racial harassment are held accountable.

**Newberg:** Newberg School District is trying to adopt policy re. the banning of BLM and Pride flags. Newberg Education Association is expected to sue if that policy is adopted. ACLU is also involved and focused on student voice and is supporting parents and students. The Board has legal representation through OSBA and PACE but those who want to ban the flags have obtained outside legal representation; as a result, the three board members in opposition don’t know where to turn. Do they also need their own attorneys, or will OSBA and/or PACE provide them? This is a huge waste of district resources and the Board’s time.

At least one student in Newberg was involved in a “slave trade” on social media and a staff member showed up in black face to protest vaccine mandates, saying they were “like Rosa Parks”. The Snapchat thing spread from other places but it points out the need for policies to protect. Also, the Newberg girls soccer team and other students with signs were “escorted out” by PARENTS for kneeling at a soccer game.

Until last year only the military had a rule about trauma/disruption, disallowing symbols such as the swastika, Confederate flag and noose. This is now the law in Oregon schools as well. Every Student Belongs is the law and some of Newberg’s board members are attempting to rescind that law with their resolution on the flags. Every Student Belongs compliance is important to retain school funding (under division 22)

- **How can caucus members support schools and school boards?** Low voter turnout has contributed to school board results in our last elections around the state. More than one Caucus member noted that those newly elected school board members in their districts are not anyone who has previously been involved at local schools. It is SO important to vote in local elections, vote down ballot and support legislation that protects students. Some possible legislation that could help with this would be campaign contribution limits, as a lot of funding for local school board races is coming from outside school districts. School board members need to be held accountable for not following laws and for putting school funding at risk. Language in teacher contracts can help too. Caucus has formed a sub-committee to draft an open letter of appreciation for educators.
- **Platform delegates:** Look for an email asking for your interest in participating through our Caucus as a delegate to the DPO Platform Convention in December. At this time it appears that the Platform Convention will be held virtually.

#### **4. Good of the order (moved and approved to extend meeting 15 minutes)**

- Please reach out to the teachers, school board members, and district employees you know that need support and thank them.
- SB 544 leaves conceal carry up to districts. Keep an eye on that.
- Mandated vaccines: Oregon Health Authority determines what vaccinations are required in schools. They have added vaccinations in the past and may do so in the future. Previous legislation re. vaccines was about removing religious/philosophical exemptions. Many vaccinations have previously been, and remain, required for students to attend public education institutions. Even allowed exemptions from vaccines may indicate that in case of disease outbreaks, unvaccinated students/staff can be excluded from campuses

**Moved, seconded, and accepted to adjourn the meeting at 12:15.**