Learning & Supporting: The Board Members’ Role in the Classroom

McMinnville School District Board Members: Tim Roberts, Janis Braich, Scott Gibson, Larry Vollmer, Stan Primozich, Barbara Carter, and Scott Schieber

Professional learning for board members on research-based practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment:
- Power Strategies for Effective Teaching
- Rigorous Curriculum Design
- Common Formative Assessments
- Data Teams process

“Having taught in other school districts, I was really surprised by how informed, engaged, supportive, and accessible our Board is.” – McMinnville Teacher
Teachers and students demonstrate instructional techniques and teaching and learning activities at board meetings
- Demonstration of teacher and students doing the math review component of balanced math
- Demonstrations of teacher and students engaged in a Socratic Seminar
- Outcome of nanolab research and work

School Improvement Showcase presentations from each school highlights proven strategies
- Staff from each building demonstrate or present on two key initiatives that have increased academic achievement and accelerate academic growth

Laying a Solid Foundation
- Each Board Member adopts a school each semester
- Board Members attend school events
- The Board tours schools/classrooms as a whole group
Benefits from Board Members in the Classroom

- Observe teaching strategies and techniques firsthand
- Connect with teachers. Make board members "approachable"
- Observe the dynamics and challenges of the classroom
- Show students that board members are involved
- Opportunity to commend and encourage staff
- Share board members' skills, insights with students when invited

HAVE a board member in my classroom makes their policy and oversight work feel more connected and aligned with my daily work with students. Also, I think the presence of a board member in the classroom sends a powerful message to kids: We care about you and hold high expectations for you.

—McMinnville teacher

Protocols for Board Member Visits to Schools and Classrooms

- Recognize that teachers and administrators may feel uncomfortable or intimidated, initially
- Start at the top and bring the principal along
- Get permission or invitation
- Schedule in advance
- Don’t speak unless invited to by the teacher
- A board member’s role is not to evaluate teaching and learning, but to observe, learn, and support
- Chat briefly with teacher when class dismisses

“Connecting with teachers and school administrators demonstrates the board member’s interest in the science and art of teaching.”

—Scott Gibson

Varieties of Board Members Visits

- Sit and observe
- Assist and volunteer (reading support, work with students, prepare curriculum materials, etc.)
- Enrich curriculum based on your personal/professional strengths and abilities
- Tour with the principal
- Greet students during lunch
- Listen to teachers and staff
- Play to your personal strengths

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

—William Butler Yeats
Interactions with Teachers

- Compliment teachers on what you observed
- Never criticize; your role is not to evaluate teachers
- Listen
- Ask questions
- Show that you value their time

“Understanding what happens in the classroom is a great platform for engaging board members.”
-Larry Vollmer

The Essential Role of School Board Members

- Look out for the interest of students. Education is not a line item on our agenda; it’s the only item.
- When making decisions about school programs, we must incorporate the community’s view of what students should know and be able to do.
- See the schools from the vantage of parents, kids, teachers, and administrators.
- We are accessible to the public and accountable for the performance of our schools.

“Effectively performing the duties of a Board Member requires a continuous cycle: Learn and Support, Learn and Support…”
- Dr. Maryalice Russell, Superintendent

The Visit and the School Principal

- The Principal is the one who can help you get the best experience.
- Let them know what you are looking to learn.
- Target particular teaching techniques you want to see, such as Socratic Seminar.
- Give them adequate advanced notice.
- Ask their advice on what to see, where to visit.
- If practical, a principal guided tour can be very helpful.
Mcminnville School District Highlights

2013/14 District MATH Proficiency Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State Average</th>
<th>% District is ABOVE State Average</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>+14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Students</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>+21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econ. Disadv.</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>+20.7%</td>
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2013/14 District READING Proficiency Rate

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>State Average</th>
<th>% District is ABOVE State Average</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>+14.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Students</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>+21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econ. Disadv.</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>+20.7%</td>
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2013/14 District SCIENCE Proficiency Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State Average</th>
<th>% District is ABOVE State Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>+14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Students</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>+10.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Econ. Disadv.</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>+10.8%</td>
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McMinnville School District Demographics:
- 6,638 enrollment
- 32% Hispanic Students
- 15% English Learners
- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 60% Economically Disadvantaged
- 78% First-Generation (parent does not have a college degree)

McMinnville High School is a state leader in dual high school/college credit. We offer fifty courses in which students can earn both high school and college credit. These courses are taught on the high school campus by high school teachers accredited through community college partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>3,201</td>
<td>4,302</td>
<td>4,593</td>
<td>6,266</td>
<td>9,287</td>
<td>7,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Class of 2013 - 236 of 360 students, or 65% of all graduates, enrolled in college
- Class of 2012 - 220 of 309 students, or 71% of all graduates, enrolled in college
- Class of 2011 - 216 of 274 students, or 78% of all graduates, enrolled in college
- Class of 2010 - 208 of 282 students, or 73% of all graduates, enrolled in college
- Class of 2009 - 202 of 295 students, or 68% of all graduates, enrolled in college
- The more dual high school/college credits a student earns, the more likely they are to enroll in, persist at, and complete a college degree.

2013/14 School Report Card Rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buel (Model)</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandhaven (Model)</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunbar</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newby</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMinnville High School</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wascher Elementary</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patton Middle School</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
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For two consecutive years (2011/12 and 2012/13), McMinnville School District has had three schools identified as Model Schools and one middle school performing in the top 5% of all middle schools in the state.

This year, the district has two schools identified as Model Schools.
McMinnville School District is one of only three programs in the nation selected by the U.S. Department of Education as a 2014 National STEM Showcase (an exemplar for other programs to replicate). Additionally, the Oregon STEM Initiative—a partnership of STEM postsecondary programs and industries—recognized the district as “A bright spot in STEM education in the state.”

“I think that more people are saying that you are not just going to do math in your job, you are going to use math in all things. So STEM makes it where we learn all things we’ll need for the future. I’m so happy we’ve been given this opportunity to take learning to another level.” — 8th Grade STEM lab student

Questions