MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

Date: June 22, 2026

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a special meeting at 9:00 a.m. via live stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website on June 19, 2026.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Tom Di Liberto
Ericka Thessen
Maya Rabasa
Jenny Jonak
Judy Newman
Morgan Munro
Rick Hamilton

ABSENT:
None

STAFF:
Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office

OTHER GUESTS:
None

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:
Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Chapter 1 President

MEDIA:
None

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Di Liberto called the special meeting/planning session to order at 9:08 a.m.

II. BOARD CHAIR WELCOME

Chair Di Liberto welcomed the Board of Directors (BOD), Superintendent Mickelson, and guests to the special meeting/planning session.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

Ms. Rabasa requested adding an additional topic – Committees – to Items for Action. Board members agreed.

IV. ITEMS FOR ACTION

The Board of Directors (BOD) thoroughly discussed the following Items for Action:

1. Board Meetings

- Board meetings are usually scheduled for the first and third Wednesday of the month. There was discussion about the effectiveness and flexibility of the current schedule.

There were no changes.

- Board meetings are typically held at 6:00 p.m. There was discussion about starting at 6:00 p.m. versus 6:30 p.m. Board members debated the pros and cons of starting at 6:00 p.m., and the practice of standalone executive sessions.

There were no changes to the Board meeting start time. Board members requested receiving written materials for decision-making executive sessions in advance.

- Monthly Board meetings include one regular meeting and one work session. Board members discussed the benefits and disadvantages of an alternating meeting schedule. Ms. Jonak expressed preference for continuing to distinguish between regular meetings and work sessions. There was brief discussion about returning to a previous meeting schedule, in which work sessions preceded regular meetings, both occurring on the same day. Ultimately there was consensus not to. Board members discussed meeting flow. They acknowledged that periodically staff presentations during regular meetings do not allow enough time for Q & A. Superintendent Mickelson recommended sending questions to her prior to the meeting. Other ways to improve efficiency during both regular meetings and work sessions were noted.

There were no changes to the current alternating meeting schedule.

- Meeting logistics and format have had Board members seated on the dais for regular board meetings and for work sessions, the Board seated at conference tables set up on the main floor. Board members debated the pros and cons of being seated on the dais versus the main floor, with the majority expressing favor for being seated on the main floor. Superintendent Mickelson pointed out practical and logistical limitations concerning meeting space.

There was consensus to allow flexibility regarding holding regular meetings on the dais versus the floor.

- Meeting accessibility includes in-person, via Zoom webinar, radio broadcast, live stream.

There were no changes.

2. Board Meetings Schedule:

- Approve the Revised Board Meeting Calendar for the 2026-27 School Year
- Approve the date of the Board Summer Planning Meeting in August

The Board opted to approve the revised Board meeting calendar for the 2026-27 school year and revisit scheduling the next summer planning meeting.

> **MOTION:** Vice Chair Thessen approve the 2026-27 revised Board meeting calendar with the exception of the summer planning meeting. Mr. Hamilton seconded. **The motion passed unanimously: 7:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor of the motion.**

3. Board Chair Remarks vs Individual Board Member Comments and Placement/Location on Meeting Agenda

The Board engaged in a discussion about Board Chair remarks versus individual Board member comments and placement/location on meeting agenda. Ms. Rabasa expressed favor for returning individual Board member comments to the start of the meeting, emphasizing that comments should be succinct (one minute or less). Vice Chair Thessen expressed slight favor for reinstating individual Board member comments at the start of the meeting. She suggested considering a rotating Board member welcome, instead of Board Chair welcome, during work sessions. Ms. Newman, Ms. Jonak, and Ms. Munro expressed preference for Board Chair remarks over individual Board member comments at the start of the meeting. Ms. Munro offered suggestions for improvement. Although he is neutral, Mr. Hamilton highlighted some benefits of Individual Board member comments, stating that they are more personalized; he recommended allowing some flexibility in the format. Chair Di Liberto reflected on the Board Chair remarks format, sharing that the remarks began feeling hollow.

There were no changes but there were suggestions for how to enhance the current format, including allowing for brief interjections during Board Chair remarks.

4. Public Comment at Meetings

- Currently, there are 10 spots for regular Board meetings and 5 spots for work sessions.

Ms. Rabasa offered two options for effectively managing public comment, based on her observations of other communities, including calling public comment a "hearing of the public" and incorporating points-of-contact. Superintendent Mickelson took note of the suggestions. Ms. Jonak recommended revisiting and refining public comment preamble language and content. Board members agreed. Mr. Hamilton pointed out a communications issue and underscored the need to address and follow up with public comments. Board members agreed that having meeting breaks following public comments has helped; they also acknowledged the inherent flaws. Ms. Jonak raised a

previously discussed topic of establishing a space for the community to interact with Board members. Superintendent Mickelson responded. Ms. Newman recommended considering the practice of responding to public commenters with an email from the Chair. Ms. Jonak voiced a desire to allow community members to comment on agenda topics during work sessions (outside of public comment time). There was consensus to revisit Ms. Jonak's suggestion at a later date.

There was consensus to refine the public comment preamble. There was consensus to allow up to 10 public commenters in work sessions. There was consensus not to limit comments by topic. Board members requested to be provided with the public comment list and topics prior to meetings.

5. Board Leadership

- Attend Board leadership meetings
- Per policy, the Board Chair sets agenda topics and finalizes meeting agendas
- Board Chair responds to communications from the community (e.g., emails)
- Board Chair encourages school visit invitations
- Vice Chair fills in when the Board Chair is unavailable

The Board discussed the possibility of making agenda setting meetings public meetings. Superintendent Mickelson offered her perspective from a leadership, staff, and budgetary lens. She offered recommendations for maintaining a transparent process. Ms. Rabasa advocated for allowing a third rotating person. She noted a change in the practice of leadership meetings compared with four years ago. Board members expressed favor of Ms. Rabasa's suggestion. Board members agreed that receiving draft agendas has been helpful. There was discussion about the Board Chair responding to communications from the community (e.g., emails). Current and previous Board chairs discussed challenges, successes, and ways to improve the practice – including a Chair and designee format for responding to communications and existing templates for use. The Board discussed the process for school visit invites. Ms. Rabasa emphasized offering more clarity for school leaders about the process (specifically informing administrators and educators that they may still invite Board members individually).

There was consensus for a rolling calendar to be available to all. There was consensus for Superintendent Mickelson to include what is upcoming and when leadership meetings are happening in the weekly newsletter. There was consensus to request from Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) an official ruling regarding public meetings laws, specifically pertaining to leadership meetings.

6. Board Meeting Agenda Setting

- Follow up on agenda topic requests

- Board member attendance

See previous agenda item.

7. Employee Group Engagement

Chair Di Liberto engaged the Board in a discussion about employee group engagement. Several Board members expressed a desire to meaningfully reengage with employee groups. Superintendent Mickelson mentioned that she and other district leadership meet with employee groups monthly; and that she would like to attend employee group/Board member joint meetings, particularly when the topics are substantive. The Board discussed Board member representation (one person from leadership and two rotating) in addition to superintendent attendance.

There was consensus for Board Chair and Vice Chair to hold a meeting with each employee group to seek their input.

8. Committees

Board members discussed committees. Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office Lisa Fjordbeck provided a handout/list of committees and assignments for review. Board members recommended adding the Board Workforce Negotiations Ad Hoc Committee to the handout/list. Superintendent Mickelson recommended seeking information from OGEC about public meeting laws pertaining to the Board Workforce Negotiations Ad Hoc Committee. Board members agreed. The Board designated the incoming Chair authority to assign members to the Legislative Committee. Superintendent Mickelson committed to gathering more information about Student Voice and reporting back to the Board. Responding to a question from Mr. Hamilton, Superintendent Mickelson confirmed that the Educational Equity Advisory Committee (EEAC) is under the purview of the superintendent/district rather than the Board. Mr. Hamilton articulated his reservations and concerns. Board members agreed that they desire updates from the EEAC.

V. ADJOURN

Chair Di Liberto adjourned the special meeting/planning session at 1:23 p.m.

Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent

Ericka Thessen, Chair

Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG)