

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD RETREAT
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a Board Retreat 12:00 – 6:00 p.m. at **4J Education Center at 200 N. Monroe St., Eugene, OR 97402**. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on August 10, 2018, and published in *The Register-Guard* on August 10, 2018.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mary Walston
Evangelina Sundgrenz
Judy Newman
Alicia Hays, Chair
Anne Marie Levis, Vice Chair
Eileen Nittler
Jim Torrey

STAFF:

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent of Schools

Media: No media were present.

Staff joined at 2:15 p.m.:

Kerry Delf, Associate Director for Communications
Brooke Wagner, Director of Elementary Education
Andy Dey, Director of Secondary Education
Kat Lange, Education Administrator
Seth Pfaefflin, Education Administrator
Charis McGaughy, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Cydney Vandercar, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services
Steve Menachemson, Director of Technology
Ryan Spain, Director of Facilities
Andrea Belz, Associate Director of Finance
Holly Langan, Support Services Manager
Karen Hardin, Associate Director of Human Resources
Bernadette Adeniran, Human Resource Administrator
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning
Kevin Herrington, Curriculum Administrator
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant

Welcome / Agenda Review:

Board Chair Alicia Hays welcomed board members and thanked everyone for attending. Ms. Hays stated that the purpose of the retreat was to create cohesion, focus on shared results for 2019, create clarity and alignment with the board.

Ms. Hays said that staff will join later for the round robin presentations; however, the first part of the retreat would be with the board and Dr. Balderas. Ms. Hays introduced Ms. Karen Gaffney who would be facilitating the retreat and lead the board through the activities.

Board Work:

- **MBTI & Team Implications**

Ms. Gaffney led the board in the Meyers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) activity and discussion.

Board members had individually taken the MBTI test earlier in the month and reviewed their individual results.

Ms. Gaffney engaged each board member individually and the board as a whole as they discussed their individual personality traits and the impact on group work and decisions.

- **Board Self Evaluation & Group Agreements for 2019**

Board members were sent a self-evaluation tool, which each board member completed prior to the retreat.

Ms. Gaffney reviewed the collective results from the board self-evaluations.

The board discussed what the role of the board really is within the district. For example, establishing the same instructional hours at each level (elementary, middle and high school) is a board decision. The time that the school bell rings or the type of schedule schools have, making that decision is the Superintendent's job.

Dr. Balderas provided the OSBA description of what the board's role in district operation is: Adopting Board Policy, Approving the Budget, Hiring/Evaluating the Superintendent.

Dr. Balderas described it as such: the board is the "what" and he and his staff are the "how." The board makes the decision on "what" the district direction will be via board policy and budget allocation. The superintendent and staff decide on "how" to implement that.

The board discussed how meeting agendas are created and how to handle a variety of topics raised either by the audience or board members.

Suggested Process:

- A request is made.
- Board Leadership will review the list of requests and together with the Superintendent determine if it becomes an agenda topic or not.
- Items for consideration will be passed on to the Superintendent / Leadership for review.
- Leadership will set the agenda with the Superintendent.

Working Agreements:

- Governance: no changes
- Meeting Agreements: Roberts Rules are used as guides, materials in advance

Ms. Hays said that the board will not entertain any information not included in the board packet sent out the Friday prior to the Wednesday meeting. The item will be pulled from the agenda if not complete in the board packet by the deadline.

Ms. Nittler said it is up to board members to get their questions in to the superintendent by Monday evening prior to the Wednesday board meeting so that staff can prepare.

Working Agreements continued:

- Communication

Mr. Torrey said it is important that the board and the district continue to communicate with the community about the district's Strategic Plan.

Ms. Newman said as a new board member, she felt it important to receive information and communication to get up to speed on the Strategic Plan.

Working Agreements continued:

- Planning and Evaluation

Mr. Torrey said we need to evaluate the goals set by the board/district. If the goal was met, what was the benchmark and if not met, why? If exceeded, what was done? If improvement is needed, what is the district plan?

Ms. Walston said she would like to see the equity tool incorporated into the board working agreements.

Ms. Hays said she would like to engage the equity committee in crafting a one-page tool that can be used to review any major district decision.

Working Agreements continued:

- Role of Board Leadership

No edits were suggested to role of board leadership

Community Relations was part of the board self-evaluation. The board discussed the possibilities of community relations being part of working agreements.

Ms. Hays welcomed staff for the next section of agenda items. She thanked them for their work in the district and for coming today to participate in this retreat

Superintendent Goals & Requests:

Dr. Balderas said that creating systems takes time. Sometimes creating systems takes longer than anticipated. Some issues happen that derail the timeline and take up staff time. There are always two or three big issues that come up each year. For example

when the district was testing for lead in the water, addressing the issue took two senior staff offline for almost three months. Not including line staff. That type of thing will happen each year, where an issue will come up and it will slow the timeline down. It won't stop the progress of the district; however, it can slow down the work of the staff/departments involved.

Dr. Balderas reviewed the big district accomplishments in the last year:

- Two association contracts bargained and agreed on;
- Calendar and schedule alignment;
- Finished construction of two new schools which opened last year;
- Implementation of Measure 98; and
- Building relationships with business partners for Career Technical Education options.
- Hired over 100 new licensed staff over the past two years. This did not reduce class size as much, but it's making a difference.
- Employee evaluation system has improved and the number of completed employee evaluations for licensed staff has increased to 95%. He said his senior staff will work with administrators on classified staff evaluations.
- Plans to work on student voice and increasing the opportunity for the board in hearing from student voice.

Dr. Balderas said that the administrator staff gathered to participate in this retreat, is the staff he believes in and the staff that will carry the district forward.

Ms. Gaffney recapped what Dr. Balderas had shared and said what that means is that the board can't do the work without the staff and the staff can't do the work without the board.

Ms. Levis thanked the staff and shared her appreciation for the work they do.

Strategic Plan Round Robin Exercise with Senior Staff:

Dr. Balderas provided a high level review of the strategic plan and recapped each goal.

Five tables representing the five goals from the Strategic Plan were staffed by senior staff for the "Round Robin" exercise: Board members separated into teams of 2 or 3 members and visited each table. Staff provided a three-minute overview of how the specific goal has been implemented. Board members had two minutes to ask questions. They then moved to the next table and received info on the next goal.

Following the "Round Robin" exercise, Ms. Gaffney asked the board to discuss how they can help with the strategic plan and what they see their role is.

Ms. Hays said the board needs to help the district stay focused.

Mr. Torrey asked how do we "inspect" what we "expect?" Mr. Torrey said that the board and district needs to tell the public what we are doing now and what to expect in the future. We need to continue to tell the community about it.

Ms. Levis said she has been asked “What does it matter that there is a district strategic plan?” Having the information and talking points she learned today, Ms. Levis said the board can take that and communicate to the community. The board is the face and the communicator to the community and hearing this information from staff is very helpful.

Ms. Newman said that board meeting agenda items can help communicate the Strategic Plan. Connecting the agenda item back to the Strategic Plan by sharing how the item supports the Strategic Plan would be helpful.

Mr. Torrey would like staff to be clear and in a way that the public can understand, and not just use “edu speak.”

Board Goals:

Ms. Gaffney led the board in the discussion on board goals. Ms. Gaffney wanted to have the board vote on top three goals.

Ms. Newman suggested the board align goals to Strategic Plan.

Graduation Rate

- CTE
- Absenteeism
- 9th graders fully scheduled
- 3rd graders reading
- Behavior referrals
- Early Learning
- Student supports
- Fully schedule High School Students
- Credit recovery

Pass the Bond!

- Community engagement with implementation
- Title IX

Legislative Priorities

Pass the Levy

Class size

Strengthen Board protocols

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

Equity

Ms. Sundgrenz would like to identify board goals to focus on and then make sure the community understands why the board is focusing on that specific item.

Ms. Hays said when she thinks about board goals, she thinks what does the board do that nobody else does. That's what she thinks of as board goals. Graduation rates, class size, etc., that's all of us board/district.

Mr. Torrey said reports on goals at a monthly board meeting would be helpful. Graduation rates can be connected to the bond so a monthly report at a board meeting letting the board and community know where we are will be helpful to know and to use when talking to the community.

Ms. Levis said we are missing a communication tool if we don't have the Strategic Plan and the Equity Tool integrated into our presentations at board meetings.

Work Plan & Managing our Calendar:

The board reviewed meeting schedules and discussed how to calendar agenda topics.

Ms. Hays said board members could suggest when and how to use work sessions to bring out information during this exercise. Ms. Hays said, for example, maybe one of the first work sessions should be on the data dashboard so that the board can understand the work that is going on and how it's moving the needle.

Suggested Work Session Topics:

- Program moves (September)
- Equitable Access (October)
- Safety & Security (October)
- Legislative priorities (December)
- Graduation rates (November)
- Student Assessments (September)
- Update on scheduling (January)
- Behavioral report (in late spring).
- Class size (ongoing)

Communication:

Ms. Hays said to continue with Friday.

Dr. Balderas said the district was looking at various communication tools such as Basecamp.

Expectations for Board Meetings & Materials:

Packet available on Friday before board meeting so board members can review over the weekend.

Questions to Superintendent by Monday. If board members request something that we don't have data for and it would take more than 15 minutes for staff to produce, Dr.

Balderas is to bring that back to Board Leadership so they can address why the question won't be answered.

Process for Board-originated resolutions:

Bring it to leadership for process review.
Staff will do research on process and bring back for consideration. Work Session in January.

Board Committees (charge, membership, staffing, meeting frequency):

Board Leadership will review importance of various committees. Mr. Torrey suggested they sunset the committee if not needed.

Other Possible Tasks & Topics:

Ms. Newman asked how do we leverage the community and partners to help solve some issues like mental health? Perhaps this is a topic for a future year.

For future discussion: Considering the development of community partnership to look at how to identify how to work to find resource for filling gaps.

Board Retreat Feedback:

Board members provided positive feedback on the board retreat topics, process, facilitation, time and communication.

Dr. Balderas thanked board members for investing the time to meet and appreciated their input.

Chair Hays adjourned the board retreat at 6:10 p.m.

(Recorded by Lisa Fjordbeck)

Dr. Gustavo Balderas
District Clerk

Alicia Hays
Board Chair