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

August 25, 2017

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a board retreat 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at **Roosevelt Middle School, 500 East 24th Street, in Eugene, Oregon**. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on August 18, 2017, and published in *The Register-Guard* on August 25, 2017.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:
Mary Walston
Evangelina Sundgenz
Judy Newman
Alicia Hays, Vice Chair
Anne Marie Levis
Eileen Nittler, Chair
Jim Torrey

STAFF:
Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent of Schools
Kerry Delf, Associate Director of Communications
Dr. Brooke Wagner, Director of Elementary Education
BJ Blake, Director of Secondary Education
Monica Brown, Director of Finance
Dr. Cheryl Linder, Director of Educational Support Services
Cydney Vandercar, Director of Human Resources
Steve Menachemson, Director of Technology
Dr. Karen Perez da Silva, Equity Manager

MEDIA: No representatives of the media were present

OTHER: No audience members present

I. BOARD RETREAT MEETING

III. CALL TO ORDER
Board Chair Nittler called the board retreat to order at 8:30 a.m.

1 AGENDA REVIEW
Dr. Balderas walked the board through the agenda. There were no changes to the agenda.

2. 4J Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan Overview

Dr. Balderas shared a PowerPoint of the 4J Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan and reminded the board that they had seen this information before, however, he wanted to offer a refresher course.

Mr. Torrey, asked about school choice and noted that we had been in the process of reviewing school choice when the board decided to focus on the North Region. Eileen, Beth and Jim were part of the school choice sub committee. Now he would like to look at school choice again and recognizes that it will take more than one year to dig in deep.

Dr. Balderas said that the district had contracted with Kay Mehas to do a deep analysis on school choice and what does choice school mean. He plans to report back to the board in the fall. The work was delayed over the summer as Kay needed to manage some issues.

Dr. Balderas said they are looking at alternative programs to see if they are still meeting the .needs of the community and that they are given charters. That's one bucket. School choice is a bigger bucket and we will need to look at that.

Mr. Torrey said he doesn't want to have it said that we are working on issues if we are not able to. He likes that a deeper look at alternate programs is underway and thinks that makes sense. Last year they were able to say we are working on the North Region. This year we can say the alternative programs. He appreciates what superintendent Balderas has brought to this district and he doesn't want to micromanage the process. He just wants the board to be informed on the process.

Dr. Balderas reviewed the vision statement that was drafted by the committee. He recognized that the board had discussed adjusting the statement and would look to the board for direction on any changes. Staff will provide the board with a deeper look at the goals when we do the breakout sessions. The board will have the opportunity to see how departments have implemented the work and track accountability.

Dr. Balderas said we would bring measure 98 funding to the board at a meeting in the fall to report how the money is being applied.

Dr. Balderas shared key performance indicators and how achievement can be seen and really graduation rate is the indicator.

Ms. Levis asked if the 40-40-20 is really used anymore? She hears people downplaying it and wonders if it is still being used or was it tossed out when administration changed in the governor's office.

Dr. Balderas said that the plan is still being used. Having 9th grade students fully loaded so that they have the schedule that they need to achieve graduation success. We are hiring 9th grade coaches to track student success and assisting with needy kids and families.

Mr. Torrey asked how will these 9th grade coaches communicate with parents and if a student needs four classes how do they make sure the students have it?

Dr. Balderas said the district is hiring the coaches right now and their job will be to work with students, facilitate supports and communication.

Mr. Torrey asked if parents receive a communication at the end of the term telling them where their student is?

Dr. Balderas said they receive updates all through the term, not just at the end. The coaches need to work with parents and keep them in the plan.

Dr. Balderas said that he will be doing a "road show" and reaching out to communities to let them know what the district will be doing through a series of community meetings.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked how will families learn of these meetings and how do we reach the most neediest families? Can we (board members) attend the meetings?

Dr. Balderas said that he plans to speak at PTO and PTA meetings. He does community listening forums and will do more this year. He has Spanish meetings and English meetings the two common languages in the district. Board members are always welcome to attend any of the meetings.

Dr. Balderas acknowledge that departments will be able to share deeper during the "speed dating" breakout sections during the retreat today.

Ms. Hays wants the board to feel connected to the strategic plan and gain an understanding on how the board can support that what should the board do to align to the plan.

3. Departmental Alignment to the 4J Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan (20 minutes each – includes passing)

- **a. Instruction**
- **b. Human Resources**
- **c. Technology/Facilities**
- **d. Finance**

Board members broke into groups of 2 or 3 and visited the various department groups via rotation every 20 minutes.

Feedback following the break out was positive.
Ms. Hays said that the time spent in breakout was awesome! She appreciated that she got to know people and that the conversations got real. Appreciated that the staff presentation was related back to the Strategic Plan.

4. Budget discussion with the Board

- **Guiding questions:**
- **How does it all align?**
- **What drives the budget development?**

Dr. Balderas shared how the budget aligns to the strategic plan. Each department developed a work plan aligned to the strategic plan and the budget aligns to the work plan. The reason for this budget discussion is to discuss the board's vision to the budget committee and how to share out the strategic plan/budget planning. Is there enough meaningful time for the board in the budget planning process? We want to make sure we have this dialogue here, to make sure we align to board's desire on budget "process" so that when we present to the board and budget committee we are alignment.

Ms. Hays asked the board what the process had been in the past.
Mr. Torrey said in the past they didn't see the budget until it got to the budget committee. He likes the current process and wants to make sure we communicate the process to the budget committee.

Ms. Sundgrenz said that as a previous budget committee member, her first year was difficult because her lack of understanding and the cuts that needed to be made. This year she had an easier

time because she better understood the process. Having more communication with the budget committee and how their roles play into the planning would be very helpful.

Ms. Walston said she thinks we need to include the budget committee a little more in the planning process instead of just rubberstamping the budget.

Ms. Levis said we ask the budget committee weigh in on the budget and they have expectations that they will be more involved. Each year we've seen the committee members feel downgraded that they don't really get to use their expertise. She suggests giving them a greater understanding of the strategic plan and how the budget will align and then providing them a greater understanding of the role of the budget committee.

Ms. Hays said that we need to set out a plan and communicate the role that they have. Bring them alongside and set the tone and orientation.

Dr. Balderas suggested we do a budget committee orientation.

Ms. Nittler asked if there should be a process before they apply? Maybe an open forum that explains what they get in to when they become a budget committee member.

Ms. Brown said that the guidelines of roles of the budget committee are reviewed at the first committee meeting. However, committee members need to know that the authority of the budget committee is limited by law.

Ms. Brown said that if we educate committee members up front so they know they can share opinion but they don't have deciding power, as that's a role of the board that would be helpful in offsetting upset .

Ms. Walston said she'd like to see a different process on budget committee appointment process. She'd like a more thorough investment in the process.

Ms. Hays asked is there a series of questions we should provide them ahead of time that they can answer?

Ms. Levis said the survey is good and she provided some edits. She would give the survey to existing budget committee members so they can see that we heard their frustration.

Ms. Newman said if you asked the question do you understand my role you won't get clarifying responses. They may have misunderstood their role.

Ms. Hays suggested that a baseline understanding is developed and then give the survey.

Dr. Balderas said what he hears from the board, is to work with staff to flesh out a presentation based on what we've heard today. Perhaps bring it to the board as an Item For Information at a future board meeting outlining the process for budget committee members and expectations of their role.

Ms. Hays I want the committee members to have the info so that they all feel they understand what their role is.

Dr. Balderas agreed with Ms. Hays and said we want that too; we are all a team. It's important that the committee felt heard and it's important that they have an understanding of what their role, which is important, is in the budget process

5. Board Roles and Responsibilities

OSBA board development specialist, Renee Sessler, facilitated the Board Roles and Responsibility discussion.

Ms. Sessler walked board members through the their role in the strategic plan and back through what OSBA has learned via the Lighthouse Project. The Strategic Plan has set clear expectations for the district. Any goals that the board adopts should align to the strategic plan.

School board members have a combined role of support and accountability. By setting goals and adopting strategic plan the board has indicated they have a role in monitoring the expectations and outcomes. You guide the district then take the information back out to the community to communicate the district work.

Ms. Sessler said she is aware that 4J has an equity tool that is referred to in planning. Gustavo explained the vision on how the staff will use the equity tool is to use it as a guide. It's not the end all be all. It's a guide and we've used the lens when in discussion on curriculum, staffing, budget, etc.

Ms. Hays asked when a decision is in front of the board, how do we know how the equity tool is being used? Do we need to know?

Dr. Balderas said some departments are using it with more fidelity than others. We are training staff. Equity is not just one person. It's a training piece and all staff members need to know how to use the tool. That means schools, departments and administrator team. That way any decision that would come to the board would be identified as part of the process.

Ms. Newman said that in her work she has experience using an equity tool and it's a great tool. It helps you focus on the right questions and having a summary of the process included in the action item.

Ms. Hays said the county used a similar tool. The UO used it as well and had various levels of use and understanding. She is excited to see the district use this with fidelity and do more training with staff.

Mr. Torrey said he hopes that there would be a way to get the equity lens on the back of a business card. When the board is reviewing a decision and we have to justify why we decided to not look at an item or reject an item, it helps to justify why. Then its handy and you can review. You can also have it on the wall in the auditorium.

Dr. Balderas said perhaps have it on the dais so you can refer to it when making decisions.

Ms. Sessler commended the board and said it was good that they are learning together as a team. When talking about making decisions you can ask has this gone through the equity tool. Set clear expectations and you can set that the equity tool has been used.
You can use the tool to jot down questions in the board meeting when hearing presentations.

Ms. Sessler asked the board what would you like to see when considering the strategic plan?

Mr. Torrey asked when would we check in on the strategic plan? Quarterly? Monthly? When we evaluate the superintendent?

Dr. Balderas said variables go into the success of the strategic plan. We can provide updates that show specific results that the staff or programs are adding to the district. And informing the board of how the system is doing in a variety of elements.. How can we structure that for the board. We are working to staff to align work sessions so we can take the board deeper into studying the metrics and strategic plans impact on the district.

Mr. Torrey said don't expect what you don't inspect is an old saying. How are you doing that as an administrator and then share that out with the board.

Ms. Sessler said board members can use the tool to identify the questions you have and you can work with the superintendent to identify those areas and ask for a report and you can learn together.

Ms. Sessler asked board members what did they learn in the roundtable discussions today and what can the board do to allow the strategic plan to flourish.

Ms. Sessler said bargaining and budget should be aligned to strategic plan. Calendar and budget is the work of the board. Is it structured in a way to allow teachers to work together so that they can deliver to kids the level of achievement plan. Curriculum is the responsibility of the board. Is the relationship and expectations of the board with the superintendent successful. What are you willing to support to ensure the expectations can be met?

Ms. Levis said we need to be thoughtful on what we can accomplish this year and what we want to avoid that would take us down a rabbit hole.

Ms. Sessler reviewed the KPI Key Performance Indicators on the Strategic Plan and asked if that was sufficient to inform the board on student achievement. When would you want a reporting out? In collaboration with your superintendent it is your role to identify what you would need to use to see the achievement.

Mr. Torrey asked where are the key hurdles that we were not able to achieve. Our strategic plan is doing this but there are challenges.

Ms. Sessler asked what can the board do to gain community support?
Communicate the strategic plan
Listen
Communicate the strategic plan
Listen
Speaking to key groups and share the district strategic plan. That's what the board can do.

Ms. Levis said this is the key thing to do this year. We need to get in front of this and support the plan. We've come back from the recession but not all the way. We are in the nexus of a difficult year. As a board we need to pay attention to this we need to share and show how great the school district is.

Ms. Sessler said basically the school board is governance. The district is management. The board says the end the superintendent figures out the means.

- Board: Goals, Advocacy, Policies
- Superintendent: operations, regulations, personnel

Ms. Levis said although she would prefer more partnership, it's clear that the board works in a bubble and we don't get into the weeds.

Ms. Sessler said there are distinct content areas of work. The superintendent can come into board area by helping set goals, advocate and provide feedback on policy. The division of roles was set intentionally to set the division so that board doesn't get into management of the district. It's easy to step down into district work and it's important to be able to communicate that board stay in its sphere of work.

Ms. Hays said that there are people who have done similar work on the board. The nice thing is that this board is that we suggest and share expertise, however, we allow the superintendent to take our comments and then do with it as he sees fit. Because some of the folks on the board have held similar roles in different jobs (e.g. County, City, etc.) and understand the distinct areas of responsibility between board and district.

Dr. Balderas said that this is a great board and you do great. Where it runs afoul is when you visit a school and if you say I have a suggestion, it's taken as a directive because they see you as authority. They caution boards not to do it so much with staff because staff see it as a directive. You can do that with the superintendent, and the superintendent will direct staff.

Mr. Torrey said it's important that the board is brought up to speed. It's like a kid first day of school, we need to take that kid through the school and help him understand the system. The same for the board. The board needs to know what the superintendent is planning. We can't, as board members, change the world because we think we have the answers.

Dr. Balderas said that he wants the board to visit schools and programs so they have an understanding of the work we do.

Ms. Levis sad when we understand the base of program, then it's easier to stay in policy and advocacy and not trying to run the district.

Ms. Sessler said that when the board has information, board members can speak to the district detail. Research backs up that you can get in the weeds when learning the details. But it's not for you to direct the program.

Ms. Sessler reiterated - the board governs and the superintendent manages the district.

Ms. Sessler reviewed the current Board Working Agreements and shared a sample of OSBA working agreements. Ms. Sessler told the board this is your working agreement and they are between you and your superintendent. It's up to you if you want to continue with the tool you've used or if you want to change the tool.

Ms. Levis asked if Ms. Sessler saw something deficient in the current working agreements? Is there a reason to change our stuff? Ms. Levis asked Ms. Newman and Ms. Sundgrenz who are looking at it with fresh eyes - Do you think it's a good thing to change?

Ms. Sessler said whatever works for this board is what you should do.

Ms. Levis said that this is a highly functioning board and do a good job communicating, respecting each other and time. Unless there is a need to change, she defers to staying with what we have.

Ms. Hays said perhaps reviewing the working agreements in case of the board changing membership, having a solid set of working agreements would be helpful. The agreements may not need to be changed, but a review would be helpful. The board may not always be high functioning in the future depending on membership and solid guidelines and agreements will be helpful.

Mr. Torrey said that he likes the OSBA proposal because it lists it clearly..

Ms. Sessler said she could help them walk through the two documents and the board could select the items that resonate with the body to come up with proposed working agreements.

Ms. Newman asked if the board needed to vote on this today?

Ms. Sessler said that today she would help the board facilitate an agreement that would be adopted at a future board meeting

Ms. Walston said she likes the OSBA list but thinks we need to keep some things from our existing list. Having a clear idea of how things get on the board agenda.

Ms. Hays suggested the board figures out a process to look at these working agreements and figure out what's missing.

Ms. Sessler said a process to help do that would be to look at the current agreement and the OSBA sample agreement and identify items that are important.

Dr. Balderas said that this board and the fact that they allow staff to do staff work and the board understands their role in governing.

Ms. Nittler asked the board what they wanted to do with the remaining time allotted. Do they focus on the one task or move on to other items of discussion?

Ms. Levis suggested a sub-committee to review the agreements and bring it back to the board in a public session.

Ms. Nittler proposed sub committee be made up of three people. Ms. Levis, Ms. Newman and Ms. Nittler.

Ms. Levis asked board members to send the sub-committee the items you think that are very important from both lists of working agreements and the committee will create a proposal to share with the board at a future meeting.

Dr. Balderas shared the Board Belief document for review. It hasn't been updated since 2013. Dr. Balderas said it could be morphed into the strategic plan. The "Belief" is the why you do. "Mission" is the purpose. "Vision" is what we dream for the future. The Strategic Plan is driving the beliefs.

Ms. Sessler said for the board and superintendent agreement, that comes in his evaluation. If the board is clear with the superintendent with your expectations, it's easier for him to meet them. For the superintendent evaluation you need to consider the timeline and the superintendent standards as well.

Ms. Sessler then reviewed Student Board Representative process with the board. She said that in Oregon, student board reps can't vote on board decisions. However, the student reps can have a voice at the table if the board wants them to.

Ms. Hays said asked Ms. Sessler if at the OSBA conferences have there been workshops on youth engagement

Ms. Walston presented the orientation packet she has put together for the next student board rep orientation after school starts.

Ms. Levis wanted to make sure there was a job description and expectation that the student reps show up for board meetings.

Ms. Hays said that some of the behavior we see comes from the culture of the school.

Ms. Levis reiterated that we need to be clear on our expectations of student board reps.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked if it's possible to release the student as board rep if they aren't working out.

Ms. Levis answered that we've never done that and she suggests the board share concerns with the superintendent and he can follow up with school administrator and student.

Ms. Nitter said that not all board members would be assigned as board buddy to a student board rep as there are only four or five students at the most serving as student board reps.

Ms. Walston said that we need to counsel our student board reps on choosing their words and comments carefully because it is a public meeting and they don't want to say something that creates an awkward situation for the board, the student or the district.

Dr. Balderas said that sometimes students say things in board meetings about a topic that should have been handled at the building level.

Ms. Walston said that part of the orientation process would be to clarify their role. Ms. Walston said she would make revisions to the orientation materials and share with the board at an upcoming board meeting.

Ms. Hays said we want to hear the student voice, however, providing them with some additional training and guidelines would be helpful. Student board reps can be lobbied by staff, community, students, etc., just like board members. The difference is these are student's first and board reps second. We need to make sure we provide supports and trainings.

Ms. Nittler said she would put together board buddy / student board rep assignments and share send out to board members.

Ms. Nittler reviewed and confirmed board member committee assignments.

Dr. Balderas suggested that site visits be scheduled and coordinated.

Ms. Nittler said another "road show" like the board participated in last year would be great.

Dr. Balderas said we will put together date options and locations to see and share with the board soon.

Ms. Walston asked for clarification if a quorum of the board participates in the tour of district sites, is that permissible.

Ms. Delf answered that site inspections were allowed and did not fall under public meeting notification.

6. Superintendent Goals & Evaluation Process

Dr. Balderas walked board member through the proposed 2017-18 superintendent evaluation tool and reviewed the evaluation timeline. Per contract, the superintendent evaluation is scheduled to be completed by May 31. Every other year a climate survey will be part of the evaluation process.

Dr. Balderas suggested having outside counsel come in and review processes in keeping info secure.

Dr. Balderas also reviewed the evaluation timeline noted in contract. Dr. Balderas said he will bring the evaluation process to a board meeting as a future action item in September.

Dr. Balderas reviewed some of the current work the district is involved in:

- Review and expand Alternative Education Programs to better serve our students. Including looking at a different location for ECCO to provide greater access for students.
- Adding 10th grade to ECCO.
- The GED program was brought in-house to better serve students.
- Measure 98 will help to engage more students.
- Offering Computer Science and Health Occupations.
- Aligning programming from elementary to middle to high school levels in technology, language immersion, etc.
- Behavioral alignment K-12.
- Assessment Adoption this year.
- Continuing to work on class size.
- Continuing to review staff and create more efficiencies. One area is an assistant superintendent of operations. The district had that position when Tom Henry and Carl Hermans. That position was eliminated when the recession hit.
- Aligning professional development work and tracking who has participated in what types of PD in the effort to centralize PD work.
- Continuing to work with Chalkboard Project.
- Will be deploying the upgrade and installation of security cameras at schools. This was part of the last bond.
- Continue to meet with community partners like EWEB to see if we can do more with our schools to provide community resource in event of natural disaster. The idea is to have 10 schools in our district to have back up generators to allow community members can come in, get a hot meal, charge their phones and then go home.
- Last year the district facilitated community meetings to introduce the strategic plan. This year Gustavo will have community meetings and "coffee with the superintendent" listening sessions. Board members are welcome to attend.
- Continuing to communicate and provide information to the community so they understand the work that goes on in the district.
- Continue to share and provide information with the board so that when asked by a community member, board members will have the information they need.
- Continue with the board policy review work. Dr. Balderas said he appreciated the work and time Mary Walston and Jim Torrey put into this committee.

- Continue to work on staff development and “growing our own” teachers and administrators.
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Mr. Torrey asked about moving ECCO to a downtown location and wanted to make sure the district would be including that on the list of facilities needs when reviewing bond options.

Dr. Balderas said that staff is investigating all options regarding building use and availability.

Dr. Balderas told the board that they had heard today from staff and can see that we have really smart people in the district and they carry out the work. In the future he will bring forward a new organizational chart to share with the board.

Ms. Levis asked that the chart also include cost out because the board often hears how the Ed Center takes money from the schools.

Dr. Balderas said that so far he has rearranged staffing positions to generate efficiencies and effectiveness without increasing cost.

Dr. Balderas said that what the board heard from staff today is that we are maybe doing too much. We have a gung-ho team and they are going fast. We need to slow down and do the work well not just trying to do many things. The 3X5 schedule is a never ending discussion. Is an example of the work that is ongoing and not ending.
The Immersion program is one we need to continue to do and do it well and not let another work item to take side track this year.

Dr. Balderas said the students are the most important work. We need to focus on what’s best for kids. If you focus on kids you are doing what’s best for teachers and for the community. You are focusing on the kids and that affects the entire system.

Mr. Torrey said he appreciates Dr. Balderas for providing the board with information on things. Mr. Torrey said that board members hear from certain pockets in the community on various things and having knowledge on the topics the accuracy of them is helpful.

Ms. Walston said that as former board chair, her feedback is to ask Erin Fennerty to be involved because it’s a lot of work that falls to the board chair. Also having reminders of the evaluation timeline is helpful for the board chair.

7. Parking Lot – Items for Future Discussion

Ms. Nittler said she had reviewed public meeting law and communication process with the board. As board chair she will answer emails from community members and blind copy the board so that they are aware a response was given.

Ms. Nittler said that at the last board meeting changes in OSAA was discussed. Ms. Nittler will be writing a letter to the reclassification committee requesting that they consider the impact of long travel times have on student academics, health and wellbeing.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:
The board convened in executive session to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed, pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(h).

The board will convene in executive session to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations, pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(d)

All matters discussed during this executive session were confidential and shall not be disclosed by any representative of the news media without authorization by the school board. Executive sessions are not open to the public.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

(Recorded by Lisa Fjordbeck, Board Secretary)

Dr. Gustavo Balderas	Eileen Nittler
District Clerk	Board Chair

Minutes approved February 14, 2018