

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

December 11, 2017

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held executive a work session at 5:30 p.m. at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on December 8, 2017, and published in *The Register-Guard* on December 11, 2017.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Charis McGaughy, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Brooke Wagner, Director for Elementary Education
Dr. Cheryl Linder, Director for Student Services
BJ Blake, Director for Secondary Education
Seth Pfaefflin, Student Services Administrator
Kerry Delf, Associate Director for Communication
Leila Schuck, Student Services Administrator
Tom Horn, Student Services Administrator
Susan Lorow, Student Services Administrator
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant / Board Secretary

MEDIA: KRVM, Register Guard

OTHER:

I. 4J Behavioral Support Programs

Ms. Nittler opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and explained the context of the workshop as an informational session for the Board to engage in conversation with staff. She invited questions or comments via email, at board.4j.lane.edu.

Dr. Balderas introduced the meeting as an opportunity to understand of current behavioral support programs at 4J schools. He thanked the Board members who were able to visit a campus and extended an invitation for the Board to set up visits in the future.

Dr. McGaughy thanked the Board for the opportunity to discuss current efforts in the district to support all 4J students. She framed the issue as a general education issue that affects all classrooms.

Dr. McGaughy presented a PowerPoint on supporting students and staff in 4J schools in order to understand the issues and introduce current programs and partnerships. She explained that, across the nation, more students are coming to school with emotional and behavioral difficulties, and more complex verbal and aggressive behaviors. While there is no definitive explanation of this trend, it is clear that students are impacted by many complex family and school stressors.

Ms. Blake also commented on a changing brain architecture as a biological factor contributing to more extreme behaviors.

Dr. Linder defined some key terminology relating to behavioral support. She explained the terms: multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), social-emotional learning (SEL), Child Find, and inclusion. She defined inclusion as opportunity for students to participate with their general education peers. Dr. Linder also introduced Tiered Levels of Support, including Tier 1: Universal, Tier 2: Selective, and Tier 3: Intensive.

Dr. Linder shared the 4J Behavior Framework that was developed with input from all levels of staff. She introduced the framework as the district's intent to provide consistent, equitable, evidence-based, proactive and sustainable multi-tiered support to promote the development of academic and social emotional skills for all students.

She explained that behaviors are not bad, rather, they are a form of communication for students. The framework is designed to be culturally-responsive, trauma-informed, and restorative. She shared that professional development for all levels of staff will help the district to implement the framework productively.

Dr. Linder outlined current programs and policies in the district right now, including reducing class sizes, increasing staff for social-emotional and behavioral supports, and supporting positive environments. She shared that Project Pass, which is currently used in four schools, uses a staff member to check-in with students throughout the day to diffuse behaviors quickly and minimize lost class time.

Mr. Torrey asked about communication with the parents of students in the Project Pass program.

Dr. Linder responded that the program has a data collection aspect to record a student's daily behaviors. The data is shared with staff and parents, which allows for quick decision-making based on the student's behavior.

Dr. Linder shared that data teams in each school are working on refining processes in order to collect quality data to inform decision-making. She explained that schools are using SWIS, a reporting database, and using consistent definitions for coding behaviors.

Ms. Nittler asked more about SWIS.

Dr. McGaughy explained that SWIS stands for School-Wide Information System. She shared that the effort to make systems more consistent has been very important.

Ms. Newman asked if SWIS was used nationally, and what happens to the data after it is collected.

Mr. Pfaefflin responded that data and behavior teams review the data for both positive trends and areas that need attention. He said that the system was developed at the University of Oregon and widely used.

Mr. Torrey asked about how the data collection processes are communicated with each school.

Mr. Pfaefflin answered that the system was purchased for the entire district to use and each principal received training.

Dr. Linder outlined opportunities for professional development in the district.

Ms. Levis asked if these opportunities are optional or built-in to staff time across the district.

Dr. Linder answered that there are built-in professional development sessions, however, it is challenging to get to find enough time to work with staff as often as desired.

Dr. Balderas said that the district is reflecting on the delivery of professional development and considering using days prior to the school year. He explained that this topic will be a topic in the budget committee discussion.

Ms. Levis raised a concern about uneven professional development across schools.

Dr. Linder responded that the department is reflecting the professional development program and considering methods to reach all staff with important trainings.

Dr. McGaughy shared that the instructional leadership team is engaging in plans to better structure professional development for all levels of employees. She shared that aligning the calendars is a big step, as it will provide more time to offer critical training for staff.

Ms. Nittler asked about the Mandt training. She clarified that everyone working in Comprehensive Learning Centers (CLCs) was supposed to receive this training on behavior de-escalation.

Dr. Linder answered that there are some new employees who have not received this training yet.

Ms. Nittler asked if not having this training limited those staff member's effectiveness in the classroom.

Dr. Linder answered that staff who have not completed Mandt training are not able to restrain a student. She shared that last week, the district sent a team to training session, so now there are six staff who will be able to provide this education within the district. Prior to this, the training was administered by Lane Education Service District (Lane ESD) and opportunities were limited.

Ms. Newman asked how the district is addressing the need for trained staff, such as working with the university in order to respond to changing needs.

Dr. Linder responded that 4J is engaging with universities to address the changing needs of teachers in the classroom. She shared that she has visited University of Oregon, Pacific, and Northwest Christian in the past few months. She also shared that she presents in several classes at Pacific where these topics come up often.

Mr. Torrey expressed that behavior support needs are not a site-based need in 4J. He asked if the district is creating a professional development plan for all schools or if individual schools are given the freedom to make their own plans.

Dr. Linder responded that the behavior framework is district-wide. It sets the stage for expectations across the district, and individual schools may have some fluctuations within the framework.

Dr. McGaughy clarified that there will be a slate of district-wide trainings and schools will have a choice to address certain additional areas related to their school improvement plan.

Mr. Torrey also asked about support from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

Dr. Balderas responded that Colt Gill, Acting Deputy Superintendent, and ODE are aware of the behavior situation. He shared that he met with Mr. Gill on Friday to discuss conducting a gap analysis in Lane County.

Dr. Linder added that ODE has updated Special Education progress monitoring and they are now using System Performance Review and Improvement (SPR&I). The indicators being tracked in this system, such as suspensions and expulsions, are generating useful conversations.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked about how mindful practices are used to reflect on behavior in the classroom.

Dr. Linder responded that teachers are using this at different levels. She shared that one teacher used the practice to center students before state testing.

Ms. Levis asked about current efforts to address space and location for particular programs at different schools.

Dr. Linder confirmed that the district is considering how to place programs within the district. She acknowledged that space is an issue, especially as enrollment increases, and 4J is looking at how to best serve students.

Dr. Balderas added that 4J is considering how a Bond might provide opportunities to address some spatial issues.

Dr. Linder explained that 4J must start at a student's home school and home region to provide services. If these schools are unable to provide for that student, other schools can be considered, but it complicates the routine for that family.

Ms. Levis asked why Comprehensive Learning Center Behavioral Programs are located in South and North, not Churchill or Sheldon.

Dr. Linder responded that programs have been opened or closed over time, based on the district's needs. She acknowledged that program openings have been based on available space, not necessarily the needs in a specific region.

Dr. Linder shared that the district serves about 2,200 students who are eligible for special education. She explained that the district has an obligation to conduct the Child Find Process in order to determine which students may need special programs or support. She stated that the process includes a district staff and parents to decide if they would like the child to be evaluated in a certain area. After the evaluation, the team works to create an education plan and the placement process begins.

Mr. Torrey commented that incoming kindergarteners are required provide behavior information from their preschool.

Dr. Linder said that students in Special Education preschools have a plan to support the child's needs and development during preschool. When they come to kindergarten, the early childhood team meets with the family to create a school-aged IEP.

Mr. Torrey asked about replicating this process from kindergarten to first grade.

Dr. Linder responded that students come in at different development levels in first grade. She explained that they monitor students to determine if an evaluation is needed, or if the student is simply in the learning process.

Dr. Balderas shared the over identification of English-language-learners with communication disorder as an example that shows the importance of moving through the process carefully.

Ms. Newman mentioned that any publicly funded preschool program has a planning aspect for transition to kindergarten.

Mr. Torrey asked for a percentage of students coming into kindergarten who come from Special Education preschool programs.

Ms. Newman said that this data is available, but she does not know a number off-hand.

Dr. Linder shared that the number of students coming into the district with specific needs has grown substantially over the past few years.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked for further explanation about misdiagnosing multilingual students with communication disorder.

Dr. Linder explained that several years ago the district looked at programs for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. From this research, a team was formed to provide guidance for multilingual students. She shared that there is a recent effort to bring English as a Second Language (ESL) and Special Education teachers together to learn and collaborate.

Dr. McGaughy added that there are statutory legal requirements for placement decisions that includes multiple groups to meet and review data.

She also shared that parents often ask for more information about specific student incidents. The district keeps student information confidential, but she assured that schools are taking action to follow up when an incident occurs.

Ms. Nittler provided a time check and asked if the group was able to stay later in order to continue the conversation. There was consensus to continue.

Dr. Linder explained that general education and special education function together. She said that special education is targeted support so that student can access general education instruction.

She discussed inclusion and stated that general education classrooms result in better outcomes for students.

Ms. Nittler asked for an example of a push-in.

Dr. Linder explained that staff comes in to the classroom to teach skills or provide support in a push-in situation.

Dr. Linder shared that placement options for high needs students include Lane School, Fox Hollow, day treatment, and residential programs.

Ms. Nittler asked if the Pass Program would be considered a push-in.

Dr. Linder responded that it would be considered a type of push-in.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked where Lane School was located.

Dr. Linder said that it is located in Westmorland.

Ms. Sundgrenz also asked for an example of the types of social skills that might be taught.

Dr. Linder replied that one example would be emotional regulation and teaching students to recognize when they feel certain emotions.

Ms. Levis asked about Springfield School District and their model.

Dr. Linder said that Springfield employs a community model, which allows students to stay in their home schools, and they disperse the necessary staff to each school. She shared that 4J is currently looking at this model.

Ms. Levis also asked if there was data on how many kids in CLCs and CLBs are attending their home schools.

Mr. Pfaefflin said that 56% of elementary students in CLCs and CLBs are being served in their home schools.

Ms. Levis asked about transitional populations impacting those percentages.

Mr. Pfaefflin said that students generally stay in this placement, but there are some mobile populations who move between Eugene and Springfield.

Dr. Linder described Fox Hollow as a hub for services, including home instruction and life skills.

Ms. Nittler asked how the home instruction program happens at a campus.

Dr. Linder replied that the program has both in-home and hub services for students who might not be able to access a larger school but can benefit from a smaller setting.

Dr. Linder shared some slides on 4J's community partners and expressed that their support is critical to serving 4J students.

Ms. Nittler asked how many of the schools have mental health providers.

Dr. Linder said that there are resources coming from several partners.

Ms. Nittler asked about billing for these services.

Dr. Linder said that these services are both private billing and billing through OHP.

Ms. Newman asked how accessible the mental health services are for students and families.

Dr. Linder answered that the Peace Health partnership has alleviated many barriers to receiving these services.

Ms. Hays shared that she appreciated the work being done to build strong community partnerships. She also shared that this discussion brings to light where budget cuts are impacting students and schools.

Ms. Walston asked if there was correlation between the increase the behaviors and increase in income inequality statewide or nationally. She also asked about can be done to improve the district's buildings as the Board moves forward with bond planning.

Dr. McGaughy replied that there is a correlation between students living in poverty and their needs.

Dr. McGaughy shared that 4J is developing a multi-year implementation plan. This plan will be incorporated into the strategic plan and the budgeting process. She outlined some tenants of the plan, including professional development additions and fostering community partnerships.

Ms. Nittler asked about some immediate programs that might improve the situation in schools right now.

Dr. Linder replied that the district has increased staffing, specifically, but not exclusively at Edison, used interventions based on recommendations from behavior consultant teams, and worked with students and families to adjust to changes.

Ms. Levis asked if there are policies or practices from the Board that have made progress more difficult. She also asked about effective programs and what can be learned from looking at these programs.

Dr. Balderas shared that the district chose to close schools and sell property years ago, which was necessary at the time. However, this has impacted schools and specific programs. He also said that it is important to make sure that a school is not over-extended with open enrollment.

Dr. Linder shared that the transition process for students and families – across schools and districts – is an area for reflection right now. She said that 4J is looking at increasing consistency through district-wide adoptions of curriculums and programs.

She said that the four behavior response team members work across the entire district, but the small team is limited. She expressed that the district is considering ways to increase the scope of this team.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked if there are any districts or programs elsewhere in the state that have been in a similar position to 4J.

Dr. Linder said that all of the directors are collaborating to share pieces of programs that are effective.

Dr. McGaughy added that 4J has partnered with Education Northwest, who provided a literature review on best practices.

Mr. Torrey thanked the staff for providing this information to the community and board. He asked if 4J is doing enough from an equity perspective for parents struggling to access services and programs.

Dr. Linder shared that she will be presenting the same information to the Equity Committee on Thursday. She said that there is always opportunity to improve outreach.

Mr. Torrey asked if there is a set procedure or policy that dictates what staff can do if a child is acting dangerously in a classroom.

Dr. Linder explained that the state provides guidance on how to approach these situations. She explained that their guidelines promote removing the attention from a child through room clears.

Ms. Newman commented that a key consideration will be prioritizing programs for implementation. She also said that gathering data from schools in various current conditions, like Howard and Edison, will help inform implementation.

Dr. McGaughy said that the best investment the district can make is in high quality instruction. The behavioral framework is a part of the instructional framework.

Ms. Hays added that the Board will have the opportunity to discuss prioritization in the budget meeting.

Ms. Nittler asked if SWIS data collects data on staff.

Ms. Vandercar said that SWIS tracks data on staff referrals to look at trends and patterns over time.

Ms. Nittler asked if SWIS tracks staff injuries.

Ms. Vandercar said that it does not.

Ms. Nittler followed up by asking about the process after a staff member has been injured.

Dr. Balderas explained that injuries are tracked through an incident report.

Ms. Nittler asked if a staff member needs a doctor's diagnosis before they can take leave.

Ms. Vandercar explained that the staff member needs to file an 801 form in order to get medical treatment.

Dr. Balderas shared that the district is working to encourage staff to report all injuries, even ones that seem insignificant.

Ms. Nittler asked about how trauma or PTSD is dealt with in staff.

Ms. Vandercar shared that the process would be the same as a physical injury. She added that all staff will be receiving training on reporting in order to improve consistency across the district.

Dr. Balderas said that the Board will continue this discussion in the spring. He mentioned that this issue will involve regional collaboration, and he is already working with other districts on solutions.

Ms. Nittler thanked the staff and shared that the next board work session will be on January 3rd from 5:15 – 6:45 p.m. She adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

(Recorded Dana Shiners

Dr. Gustavo Balderas
District Clerk

Eileen Nittler
Board Chair

Minutes approved February 14, 2018