

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

May 30, 2018

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 5:30 p.m. and a community forum at 7:00 p.m. at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street, Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on May 25, 2018, and published in *The Register-Guard* on May 30, 2018.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent of Schools
Charis McGaughy, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Kerry Delf, Associate Director of Communications
Brooke Wagner, Director of Elementary Education
BJ Blake, Director of Secondary Education
Cheryl Linder, Director of Educational Support Services
Cydney Vandercar, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services
Christine Nesbit, In House Legal Counsel
Harlan Coats, Director of Facilities Management
Steve Menachemson, Director of Technology
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant / Board Secretary
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning

MEDIA: KRVM

I. WORK SESSION: DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL PROGRAM MOVES

Board Chair Nittler opened the work session at 5:32 p.m.

Dr. Balderas said the intent of the work session was to look at placement for Yujin Gakuen (YG), as well as discuss placements for Corridor, the Chinese Immersion Program, the Natives Program, and ECCO expansion as they affected each other. Dr. Balderas explained if the board approved a bond measure that included a replacement high school, the school would be built on the Silver Lee site and displace two programs (YG and Corridor). The district wanted to keep YG on the northside of town, as a majority of students came from the region (data on where students came from was included in the packet). He said Kelly Middle School was a possible site that would allow YG to continue the same program, with a possible expansion. Kelly Middle

School had a capacity of 945 students with 30 classes. Its current enrollment was 375; it was the middle school with the most capacity, and it would be a temporary placement.

Dr. Balderas walked through the blueprint of the building. He pointed to where YG would be housed and explained the district would need to convert some classroom space. There was a possibility to create up to 15 classrooms with a minor remodel. Kelly Middle School students would be housed in a different area; it had been a concern from the community in regard to older kids coming through hallways, so there could be a pathway to access the cafeteria and outdoor area, and there would be a separate drop off entrance. There was also an area for playground space, which the district would have to purchase. Dr. Balderas reiterated the option could be a possible temporary, two-year solution until the North Eugene High School was built.

Ms. Levis wondered how many classrooms YG currently had. Dr. Balderas responded 13 classrooms. Mr. Torrey wondered if they included the portables in the figures. Dr. Balderas said yes. He shared a temporary design for YG and added it would take some dollars for the remodels. A long-term solution could be the possible renovation of North Eugene High School and keeping the building for future programming purposes. One thing the district would want to ask the board at a future meeting was the possibility to add additional dollars for possible renovations for those programs that would be displaced.

Chair Nittler wondered if the district identified a dollar amount for the remodel. Dr. Balderas said they estimated \$800,000. Ms. Newman asked if Kelly Middle School was using the entire building. Dr. Balderas said yes, classes were spread throughout the building. She wondered how many classrooms the school actually needed. Ms. Wagner said there were many empty classrooms. Kelly Middle School needed anywhere from 12 to 14 and the configuration would give them 16. Ms. Levis clarified whether the temporary remodel would provide YG the opportunity to create a kindergarten through 8th grade or if they would still only look at the current K-5. Ms. Wagner said while YG was located there, it could be kindergarten through 8th grade but afterward, they were unsure. Ms. Levis understood immersion programs needed to bulk up at the lower level, as attrition happened. She wondered if that was accounted for in the two years. Ms. Wagner said typically for middle school, they needed two classrooms. With the change in the school choice process to a lottery system, immersion programs now could take kids grade by grade instead of picking from a list. It allowed the district to even out the class list for the grade levels. Ms. Wagner said over the last two years, they had cleared the waitlist for YG and there was not one the way it had been at some other immersion programs. Ms. Levis said for immersion, it was usually not just two kindergarten classes and two first grade classes because the district tried to have more students at the lower levels. Dr. Balderas responded that solid programs didn't have a lot of attrition. He covered student numbers in Japanese courses throughout grade levels and noted there was attrition from middle to high school. It was a programmatic concern staff was working to address.

Ms. Sundgrenz arrived at 5:42 p.m.

Ms. Newman asked whether programs had separate administrations or if they worked together if colocated. Dr. Balderas said the district would want to have administration remain intact for YG throughout the transitions. Ms. Wagner clarified the ratio numbers used; they bulked up immersion classes to 30 students to help with attrition. Ms. Walston asked for the plans for lunch and cafeteria use by each school. Ms. Wagner said the start and end times for schools were different, and both YG and Kelly Middle School had two lunches. She clarified that middle and elementary students would not be together during lunch or on the playground. There was a large fenced area where the playground would be located.

Ms. Walston was curious about the library. Ms. Wagner said the library at Kelly Middle School had been remodeled and it was very large. The school might combine collections or use a classroom to keep them separate. Dr. Balderas said staff would have to come up with hard numbers and schematics to show what it could look like and what the cost could be. There were still some issues to be addressed.

Mr. Torrey said it was a transition period and it was important for the community to understand that. Anytime a building was torn down, an interim space was needed. Mr. Torrey explained the district heard for years that the placement of YG and Corridor within the Silver Lee facility wasn't working. He thought all board members wanted a kindergarten through 8th grade articulation at YG. It was an opportunity for YG to do that within the repurposed North Eugene High School, and then also feed into an immersion program within the new North Eugene High School. He thought the reconfiguration would likely be a city block and it kept everything in the North Eugene area. It would also allow the district to offer immersion programs in all four of the high schools. It wasn't perfect but he hoped the community would see that, in his opinion, it was the best they could do given the limitations and how much money the public was willing to put forward. Mr. Torrey wanted to designate additional dollars within the bond, specifically to improve the facility or to do what YG wanted. He reiterated the board cared about what happened to the program. Chair Nittler noted YG could possibly stay at the Kelly Middle School site, while Kelly Middle School could move to the old North Eugene Site. Dr. Balderas said it could be a possibility; there was a lot of opportunity.

Ms. Levis thought the most important thing was having clarity and certainty. The board had been talking for a long time about the issue; she liked the idea of putting money in the bond with program names attached to the funds. Then, they would give certainty to YG and there would be a place for them that would allow growth, and certainty in moving the new Chinese immersion program. Ms. Levis appreciated Dr. Balderas putting that idea forward. Dr. Balderas said he would ask the board to approve setting money aside at a future meeting and wanted to also mention that possibility before the community forum, so people were aware.

Dr. Balderas said the majority of Corridor families came from the north side. There were currently 216 students, and he explained how many students came from each neighborhood school. Corridor had seven classrooms and there were two sites considered for the temporary move. Those sites were Howard Elementary, which would cause some displacement of programs like special education and pre-school, and the upper wing of North Eugene High School, which was a large space with over 60 classrooms. Dr. Balderas hoped to reach a concrete plan to provide clear communication to the Corridor community.

Ms. Sundgrenz supported what had been said thus far in the meeting. She realized there were a lot of options, but a lot of trade-offs. If YG was at Kelly Middle School for longer, or they decided to stay, she wondered how long a name change took to occur and whether there was a process to ask stakeholders. Dr. Balderas said there was an established process involving community members, and they could do it at any time. It was fairly short and easy.

Ms. Newman supported the idea of adding money to the proposed bond; she thought these were two good ideas, and she wanted to ensure there was extra money to renovate North and to accommodate identified needs for YG. Ms. Newman thought YG may not know exactly what they want until they were in Kelly Middle School or another facility for a while. She did not want to force a decision on the school and wanted a process to ensure YG parents had input. Ms. Levis added that having enough money in the bond with a plan to move forward, while leaving

flexibility to add input from parent groups, teachers, and other community members was important. There could be a solution board members or staff hadn't even thought about. Ms. Levis didn't want to lock district in but wanted to commit money toward a permanent place for YG, ECCO, and the Natives Program.

Ms. Sundgrenz wondered whether there would be two distinct programs if Corridor moved to Howard Elementary School. Dr. Balderas responded they would be temporarily be collocated. Ms. Sundgrenz told the board at the recent listening session, she heard a few parents support the idea of creating an entire Asian language and cultural center, where the Japanese and Chinese programs were combined. It had not been an option discussed by the board before, but she personally did not want to go down that route because she felt it was important to have an immersion program in every area. Ms. Sundgrenz was also concerned about locking the board into decision around the bond. She didn't want the bond to state they would do certain things and then have an unforeseen circumstance prevent the district from following through. Mr. Torrey was also opposed to having Japanese and Chinese immersion programs in the same building. In addition, putting YG into the Kelly facility created an opportunity for Corridor at North Eugene High School. He explained that behind the east parking lot at North Eugene High School, there was plenty of capacity to house eight to 10 classrooms. The rooms would be separated from the high school and had plenty of playground opportunity. Mr. Torrey reminded that money within the bond would not only be used for construction and engineering, but also to allow an architect to work with the public and come up with a suitable design. Mr. Torrey thought it was truly an opportunity for both schools to say what could be better. In the end, the board and district would always want to be efficient with the public's money.

Ms. Walston agreed with what was said so far and liked the idea of committing to a building plan but not the project. She also wanted to see the board commit money in the future to help support a viable program at the middle school level, since that was where they lost students. Dr. Balderas appreciated her comment and explained over the past two years, a task force team had been assigned to look at the trend and how to improve and to ensure that there were clear pathways. That year, the district had augmented staff at the middle school level. Ms. Walston added it would be a budget consideration later on.

Dr. Balderas went over the blueprint for North Eugene High School; he explained there were once 1,200 to 1,300 students but there were now around 800. Ms. Newman wondered if Corridor had concerns about collocation at one site versus another. Ms. Wagner said the strongest feeling from the community was that Corridor wanted to stay in the north region. Ms. Levis said that what she liked, at least temporarily, about having Corridor at the North Eugene site was that it didn't displace any other programs. Ms. Levis had been on the board long enough that she was pretty uncomfortable with collocation due to past issues. Dr. Balderas said he agreed and explained that due to collocation, YG could not grow. Ms. Walston clarified Corridor had 200 students while Howard Elementary School was 500 and wondered if the facility would fit 700. Dr. Balderas said there was program space, but some special programs were displaced such as art space and life skills. Some art programs at North Eugene High School would also be displaced.

Ms. Newman asked if things could be absorbed back into the school. Dr. Balderas said yes, these plans were just beginning in order to identify space. The bond would provide opportunity for growth for programming at North Eugene High School. Mr. Torrey assumed the district would be able to take advantage of the cafeteria at North Eugene High School to provide lunch for corridor students.

Dr. Balderas said the district had a couple of options for the Chinese immersion program currently located at Crest Drive. They could start there, and then move to Bailey Hill. Another option would be to have kindergarten through second grade at Crest Drive and have third through eighth grades at Kennedy Middle School. There were many open classrooms in pod areas. Ms. Sundgrenz wondered if they were the same type of pods at Bailey Hill. Dr. Balderas said yes; there were five classrooms and then a sort of “auditorium” space.

Dr. Balderas said people had suggested moving the Chinese immersion program to Bailey Hill; if ECCO moved to Bailey Hill, there could be a possible kindergarten through eighth grade program. Ms. Wagner said there could be a separate drop off area since there was already a road and a field space that could be fenced in. On a map, Dr. Balderas pointed out pods that could hold programming. Dr. Balderas said it was colocation in a way, but each program really would have its own school essentially. Ms. Levis thought it would be a clear distinction, having programs separate. She thought it caused friction with shared spaces and shared administrators. She liked the plan and not splitting the levels apart; it made more sense.

Dr. Balderas shared programs located at Bailey Hill, which included EWEB, EYSO, and the Natives Program. There was programming in one area of the school. A lot of space was being used for storage instead of classroom space, so it would be important to find appropriate facilities for the types of items stored, such as totem poles.

Ms. Levis appreciated the Natives Program for spending so much time with the board on a recent Friday. The board very much valued and honored the program. Ms. Levis noted the Natives Program appeared to already be running out of space, as things were stored in the hallway. She thought whatever they could do to maximize space and use the entire building was important. In addition, the proposed future ECCO space was not accessible as the slope was not ADA so dollars would need to go toward the site. Dr. Balderas said part of the funds they could add to the bond could allow for ECCO renovations and to create a more refined and defined space to store artifacts. He explained the Natives Program served the community, not only students. Ms. Levis pointed out it would be important because if a student needed to access the library of artifacts, it was not currently accessible.

Ms. Newman agreed and wanted to consider how to make the program more accessible and more usable. She did not know the interim plan, but also wanted to consider the Natives Program in the north area as it was possibly more central, and they might have more open space for dance activities and more. The storage did not need to take classroom space, but it should be accessible and safe. Ms. Newman wanted a better understanding of the exact programming done and space needed. Dr. Balderas agreed and appreciated those comments. He thought of a warehouse type of setting with garage doors to back up a truck to pick up items. Ms. Newman said the bond gave the board an opportunity to step back and think about how to be more efficient, and to be forward thinking and improve.

Mr. Torrey was concerned about future problems if they chose to colocate ECCO and the Natives Program, and then later expanded ECCO to a ninth through 12th grade program. Mr. Torrey thought if the Natives Program could restrict their size, they could have capacity to still do a ninth through 12th grade program but would need to coordinate use of rooms. Mr. Torrey wanted to step away from colocation. Dr. Balderas said if they identified the right space for storage, they could use classrooms currently used for office and storage space. Mr. Torrey hoped the community knew they were not trying to get rid of the program because it was very valuable.

Ms. Sundgrenz said there was tremendous value to the Natives Program for students and to First Nations communities as a whole. They discussed artifact storage, but Ms. Sundgrenz was specifically concerned about proper artifact storage such as feathers and clothing. She wondered how to maintain storage without continued disintegration. Ms. Sundgrenz was also concerned about the room for growth. She wondered if the EWEB and EYOS programs would grow. Dr. Balderas said the district was looking to house the EYOS program on River Road. Chair Nittler clarified the EYOS only stored equipment at Bailey Hill, they did not practice there. Finally, Ms. Sundgrenz wondered about the library. It was not ADA accessible and there were artifacts stored there. In addition, if there was a fire or disaster, it did not have enough space. Ms. Sundgrenz's last concern was how to assist the Natives Programs with digital storage of files to create a better way to access them. Dr. Balderas said staff could work on digital storage now. Dr. Balderas said there were issues with ADA and some dollars allocated would be for those improvements. Ms. Walston clarified the EWEB program was not a district program, either. Dr. Balderas said the district was working on identifying storage space for them as well.

Dr. Balderas concluded there were a lot of variables and moving pieces. Staff had communicated with Kelly Middle School, Corridor, and YG staff, and would continue to do so as plans became more concrete. Dedicating dollars and naming where they would go would be important. It would provide cushion to do the right thing for the programs displaced, even if on a temporary basis. Ms. Levis said the process was the product; when officializing the bond, it was important to have a timeline and calendar of communication, and circle back with groups. Ms. Levis added communities needed to know there was a plan in place because board members changed over time. They needed to have commitments beyond board members. Dr. Balderas thought having a long-range facilities committee of stakeholders to tackle those issues and offset the bond committee could be effective. He thought stakeholders could include architects, city staff, and parents, for example, and the committee could provide recommendations to staff and the board. It could help provide a broader view of everything.

Ms. Newman thought having a committee was important, because it was a complicated puzzle, and everyone needed to work together. It was important that the solutions were looked at together. The committee could be a good vehicle to receive input. Mr. Torrey hoped the board could move fairly quickly on a decision for ECCO. The board would have to do a sizable amount of work within the facility and the sooner they could start the better. Another question Mr. Torrey still had was about public transportation for students from a main arterial to Bailey Hill. He was concerned about how to get young mothers with children, for example, to the location. Dr. Balderas had been in communication with AJ Johnson from Lane Transit District (LTD). He said they were being thoughtful and wanted to apologize there was a perception of lack of communication between the district and parents. Dr. Balderas had tasked staff with timelines for a communication plan for each project. He thanked the board for pushing to reach more complete plans.

II. **ADJORN**

Chair Nittler adjourned the work session at 6:40 p.m.

(Recorded by Marina Brassfield)

Dr. Gustavo Balderas
District Clerk

Alicia Hays
Board Chair

