

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

November 4, 2020

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular session at 7 p.m. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on October 30, 2020, and published in The Register-Guard on November 4, 2020.

NOTICE: In light of current public health concerns related to coronavirus COVID-19, the meeting of the Eugene School District Board of Directors took place virtually via Zoom Meeting. Pursuant to ORS 192.670, the meeting was open to the public via live radio broadcast on KRVM 1280-AM and via the Internet at www.4j.lane.edu/

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mary Walston, Chair
Judy Newman, Vice Chair
Anne Marie Levis
Alicia Hays
Martina Shabram
Jim Torrey
Gordon Lafer

STAFF:

Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent
Charis McGaughy, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff
Brooke Wagner, Director of K-8 Education
Andy Dey, Director of Secondary Education
Kat Lange, Director of Student Services
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Steve Menachemson, Director of Technology Services
Jeffrey Johnson, Director of K-8 Education
Andrea Belz, Director of Financial Services
Holly Langan, Director of Administrative Services
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary
Karen Hardin, Director of Human Resources

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Harmony Simmons, Churchill High School
Dusty Temple, ECCO High School
Joel Sadofsky, International High School
Paige Dunnavant, North Eugene High School
Mazie McNamara, Sheldon High School
Noa Ablow Measelle, South Eugene High School (absent)

MEDIA: KRVM Radio

OTHER: Sabrina Gordon, EEA President

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Flag Salute, Land Acknowledgement

Chair Walston opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. She called roll and read out the land acknowledgement.

II. Agenda Review

There were no changes made. Ms. Walston approved the agenda as presented.

III. Introduction of Guests and Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Vandercar introduced the new student representatives who would be sworn in: Harmony Simmons from Churchill High School, Dusty Temple from ECCO, Joel Sadofsky from IHS, Paige Dunnivant from North Eugene High School, and Mazie McNamara from Sheldon High School. Noa Ablow Measelle was not at the meeting that night but would be representing South Eugene High School. Superintendent Vandercar read out the oath and the student representatives repeated it.

Superintendent Vandercar thanked the Board for their ongoing service to the District. She mentioned that they had heard from the community about wanting students back in school, but they needed to prioritize safety. They would work with Eugene Education Association (EEA) going forward and were looking forward to at some point moving into a hybrid model. Currently the District was preparing for winter athletics. Contact sports would not be played at that time.

IV. Comments by Board Chair

Chair Walston welcomed the student representatives, there was an orientation earlier that night and each student was paired with a Board member mentor.

Chair Walston stated that they would be appointing three people to the Budget Committee that night. She appreciated all the people that applied and noted that two applicants had dropped out. They would be allocating 30 minutes to COVID-19 discussions that night and if needed that discussion could go longer.

V. Items Raised by the Community

Chair Walston stated that all Board members had read the public comments they received. They would start having live public comment at their meetings again on December 2, 2020.

VI. Comments by Employee Groups

Sabrina Gordon from Eugene Education Association (EEA) said she was excited to see that student representatives were back and adding their voices to the conversations. Everyone had learned a lot in the first bit of online learning, but the outlines did not include all the challenges that teachers and students were facing. She stated that teachers needed to be involved in the conversation since they in charge of online learning.

1. Receive Reports from High School Student Representatives

Mazie McNamara, Sheldon High School, was excited to work with everyone going forward. She stated that students were experiencing burn out like teachers. The biggest issue she was facing was focusing on the screen for so long every day. Ms. McNamara was unsure of how to fix this issue but mentioned that she enjoyed when teachers gave breaks and tried to mix up class structure.

Harmony Simmons, Churchill High School, outlined some of the virtual events that they had done to try and keep the student body excited and involved.

Paige Dunnavant, North Eugene High School, shared that burnout had been bad but they were trying to keep students engaged through virtual events.

Joel Sadofsky, IHS, said that they were working on community building and figuring out how to do that virtually. He thought that eliminating asynchronous attendance would help students through this difficult time.

VII. Consent Group – Items for Action

- 1. Approve Agreement with Eugene Education Association (EEA) on Working Conditions during Comprehensive Distance Learning and Hybrid Instruction**
- 2. Approve Meeting Minutes: September 2, 2020, September 16, 2020, September 21, 2020, September 23, 2020**

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Hays, to approve the consent group.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

VIII. Items for Information

- 1. Receive Update on COVID-19 and Return to Learning**

Ms. Delf said that the metrics, which determined when they would be able to go back to in-person learning, had changed. Although numbers still needed to go down because Lane County was not meeting the requirements.

Ms. Delf noted that the time for the metrics was changed (seven days to 14 days) as well as the case numbers.

There were different metrics and models that they had to account for. The County case rate per 100,000 people over 14 days on site had to be less than 50 (previously it was 10 cases for 7 days), for on-site learning cases had to be between 50 to 100 cases, for transitioning cases had to be between 100 to 200, and distanced learning was mandatory when there were over 200 cases. They also had to manage the County test positivity rate. If it was under 5% they could have on-site learning, if it was between 5% and 8% they could have distanced on-site learning, between 8% and 10% they had to transition, and anything above 10% meant they had to be in distanced learning.

Chair Walston asked if they would get an update in late December or early January on their plan. Ms. Delf responded that they would keep the Board updated along with the community.

Ms. Newman asked if the parent survey was out yet. Ms. Delf replied that it was not out yet because they wanted to hear about the whole Fall term, which was still ongoing.

Mr. Torrey wanted to make sure that the community was kept up to date. He asked when the community would have information for the next trimester. Ms. Delf told him that there would be more information on specific dates in the coming weeks. They planned to go to a hybrid model in the new year, but they were unsure now because of the increase in COVID-19 cases in Lane County. They would keep everyone informed when they had more information. Mr. Torrey wondered what they would do for the families that wanted to stay completely online and if they were thinking outside the box about how to teach all students. Ms. Wagner responded that they surveyed families at the beginning of the year and 20% of their students wanted to stay online. They had yet to detail how they would navigate online students when in a hybrid model but would be coming up with a system soon.

Mr. Lafer stated that they needed to create their own guidelines for each building and start to ask how they would accommodate people, both students and staff, who were not allowed to go inside. Superintendent Vandercar shared that they were starting to get very detailed with possible scenarios and would be presenting that information later.

Megan Schultz, Andy Dey, and Misael Gutierrez were there to present on the youth drop-in center.

Mr. Dey said that there was an increase in students experiencing homelessness because of COVID-19. Those students were not able to focus on school because they had to think about where to sleep and what they were going to eat. Ms. Schultz said that 15th Night worked to help those students. The main goal of the center was to help those students and rally around them. They worked to connect students with resources like beds, laundry machines, computers, and food, so they could concentrate on school. They were also educating staff on what was helpful and not helpful for those kids.

Mr. Dey said that organizations in the area were providing pro-bono help for the center. One issue that schools always had was how to help students when they were outside the building. They hoped that 15th Night would be a way to fix that. He acknowledged that there was still a lot that could be done. Mr. Gutierrez had visited the space and said that it had hangout areas to help students decompress. Ms. Schultz added that any students could use the center, not just those experiencing homelessness.

Chair Walston asked if this was a city building. Mr. Dey told her that it was and that their community partners and the City were very helpful in its creation.

Ms. Shabram wanted to know if the hostel area was open. Mr. Dey replied that the center would open on November 16, 2020. Some work in the hostel area still needed to be done and that would take 45 to 60 days to complete.

Ms. Newman commented, she was in awe with all the work that has been done. She thanked all of them for all their work and for the impact they have made on the community.

Mr. Lafer wanted to make sure that they had enough money to get the center done. Ms. Schultz replied that the whole thing was a community effort with diverse funding. However, most of their funding came from a single donor. Mr. Dey said that they received a three-year grant from United Way.

Ms. Delf mentioned that the Board asked at a previous meeting about student resources for online learning. They had a list of technical support resources for families on the District website. Also, there would be training sessions available. The first one would be November 5, 2020 for elementary families. There would be sessions for middle school and high school families the following week. Information on those meetings had been sent out to all families. Spanish and ASL would also be available for anyone who needed it. They would use the same link and choose English, Spanish, or ASL when it loaded.

2. Update on District Enrollment

Oscar Loureiro shared information on student enrollment as of October 1, 2020. They had 15,839 students, which was 474 fewer than 2019 and 679 fewer than projected. He stated that 2020 was their lowest enrollment year since 1961.

Mr. Loureiro stated that Kindergarten experienced the largest loss in enrollment. 53% of all the differential between enrollment and projections happened in Kindergarten and 1st grade. They had projected 1,270 Kindergarten students and ended up having 996 students with a differential of 21.6.

Mr. Loureiro shared that of the 474 student enrollment drop, 66% (314 students) were accounted for by increases in the number of homeschooled students and students transferring to virtual charter schools. Transfers into homeschooling and virtual charter schools did not account for the additional 160 student drop in enrollment and the absence of the projected enrollment growth. There was evidence that most Oregon districts saw similar enrollment drop concentrated in Kindergarten. 93% of the drop in Kindergarten enrollment happened among White students, breaking the pattern in the demographic profile of the entering Kindergarten class in the last few years. In 2019 they had 890 White students and in 2020 they had 635. The percentage of Latino students in Kindergarten classes went from 14.3 in 2019 to 17.7 in 2020.

Mr. Loureiro said that barring legislative or administrative relief, the District would likely see a decline in State School Fund (SSF) payments for the current year (2020-21) as well as the following year (2021-22). He said that SSF payments used the greater of current year or prior year enrollment to calculate payments. If school Districts with declining enrollment used 2019-20 numbers, and online charters used their higher 2020-21 enrollment, statewide enrollment effectively 'double counted' students. The funds were divided by an inflated statewide enrollment, and the amount paid per student declined. Mr. Loureiro explained that in 2021-22 they would likely see a reversal with the same result. Districts with improved enrollment would use 2021-22 numbers and online charters that would likely lose enrollment would use their higher 2020-21 numbers.

Ms. Belz said that they would see the funding impact moving forward. The budget was based on the larger year of enrollment of two years.

Mr. Lafer asked if their loss would be cushioned in any way. Ms. Belz replied that they would need to hear back from Oregon Department of Education (ODE) before they knew anything more.

Ms. Newman asked if the 3% cap was still in effect statewide. Mr. Loureiro told her that was correct. Ms. Newman wanted to know at some point in the future if that could be extended if they needed. Mr. Loureiro responded that if a new student had a sibling already enrolled in 4J then the 3% cap did not matter, but no new families could be taken in.

IX. Items for Action

1. Approve Extension to Interim Superintendent Contract

Chair Walston stated that the board had appointed Ms. Vandercar as the Interim Superintendent back in the Spring and started the process of finding a law firm to help them find a full time Superintendent. The Board had decided to stop that process and decided to extend Superintendent Vandercar's role. Chair Walston said that she talked to Superintendent Vandercar and she would accept the extension.

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to have Ms. Walston work with Superintendent Vandercar on her contract for the following year.

Mr. Torrey mentioned that the current contract had Superintendent Vandercar in the position until June 30, 2021 and that the new contract would be through June 30, 2022.

Ms. Levis appreciated that they had made this decision so they could focus on everything else going on at that time. Ms. Shabram wanted the community to know that they decided to do this because of COVID-19 concerns and that they wanted to be fiscally responsible. Mr. Torrey added that Superintendent Vandercar had done a great job and they had no reason to start over with someone new with everything else going on.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

2. Appoint Budget Committee Members

Ms. Delf said that there were three open positions for the Budget Committee that each lasted three years. She said that they would go through the process of voting that was emailed out to the Board. They would vote until there were three candidates that got majority votes. Each Board member would have three votes.

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Shabram, to appoint the three Budget Committee members as outlined by staff.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

Ms. Newman stated that she was impressed with all the candidates they got and wanted to work to have a different interview process in the future. She wanted to learn more about the candidates and rule some out before the vote.

All Board members used one vote to reappoint Josh Burstein. Mr. Torrey and Ms. Newman voted for Gary Campbell. Mr. Torrey, Ms. Newman, Ms. Levis, and Ms. Hays voted for Anne Fifield. Ms. Hays voted for Anne Weinman Gonzales. Ms. Walston voted for Morgan Munro. Ms. Walston voted for Stephan Parac. Mr. Lafer voted for Tanya Pitts. Ms. Shabram and Ms. Levis voted for Eli Ruth-Cheff. Ms. Shabram and Mr. Lafer voted for Ericka Thessen.

Josh Burstein and Anne Fifield would be appointed to the Budget Committee.

Ms. Delf said that they would now vote to appoint the last candidate. Each Board member would only have one vote.

Mr. Torrey, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Walston voted for Gary Campbell. Ms. Levis and Ms. Hays voted for Eli Ruth-Cheff. Ms. Shabram and Mr. Lafer voted for Ericka Thessen.

Gary Campbell moved forward.

MOTION: Mr. Torrey moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to appoint Josh Burstein, Anne Fifield, and Gary Campbell to the 4J Budget Committee.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

x. Items for Action at a Future Meeting

1. Consider Proposed Board Policy ACB Hate Symbols and Bias Incidents

Superintendent Vandercar said that Ms. Nesbit had been working on this policy for a while. She thanked the students that started this policy change at the State level.

Ms. Nesbit shared that for decades the District has prohibited discrimination and harassment of students and staff based on race, religion, and other protected characteristics. Students and Staff had still been exposed to hate symbols and the District agreed with the state analysis that happened. The new policy defined hate symbols and bias incidents and crimes. She pointed out that they had other civil rights policies and that this policy would just be another part of the total policy they had.

Ms. Shabram and Ms. Newman asked questions about some comments throughout the policy that seemed like they were not supposed to be there. Ms. Nesbit noted that the Board must have received a draft version of the policy and that a final version would be sent to the Board before they voted on the policy at their November 18, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Newman wanted to know more about the tracking which would take place. Ms. Nesbit told her that tracking was something they would want to investigate more because it would go behind hate symbols. She added that it was also a resource allocation issue. Ms. Newman believed that tracking and accountability were crucial.

Chair Walston asked how EPD would be connected to this policy. Ms. Nesbit replied that EPD would be involved, potentially, in response to any hate crimes that happened.

2. Vote on Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) Elections

Ms. Delf said that they would be voting on Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) elections at their next meeting. There was just one resolution they would be voting on, OSBA 2021-2022 legislative priorities and principals. They would vote to approve or deny as individual Board members and then a singular vote would be sent to OSBA on behalf of 4J.

XI. Comments and Committee Reports by Individual Board Members

Ms. Shabram was glad to have the student representatives back at their meetings. She noted that the students had no power to vote at their meetings, but they still worked hard to push the District and Country forward every day. The City of Eugene was currently accepting applications for the new Youth Advisory Board and encouraged students to apply. Ms. Shabram felt that young voices were needed at any table where decisions were being made.

Mr. Lafer said that schools were the centers of their community. It was important for them to focus on reopening schools, but they should not forget what they learned at the EEA listening sessions. He wanted to hear more about teachers having to set up two lesson plans. Mr. Lafer talked about how Arizona passed a law that residents earning \$250,000 or more paid taxes that went directly to schools. He hoped they could see something like this in Oregon someday.

Mr. Torrey went to a zoom meeting with the Monroe Middle School kids and administration earlier that week. He was impressed by how dedicated and hurt students were to not being able to talk to their teachers and friends at school. Mr. Torrey said that they were underserving kids in need by having sports have a monetary hurdle. He wanted clarification on why the public could not use their facilities when other schools in Oregon were opening theirs. Mr. Torrey wondered if they could have Kids Sports or the YMCA provide activities for the students.

Ms. Newman stated that civic engagement was very important and happy to see people in the community step up through the Budget Committee applications. She was glad that ODE had changed the metrics for reopening to be more attainable. Ms. Newman was proud of the community for stepping up and helping students where they could.

Ms. Levis had attended a Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) meeting and was happy to see how dedicated they were to funding. She thanked Stephen Parac for all his work. Ms. Levis wanted the District to put something in the memo about student volunteer hours. Students were having issues meeting the requirements. She wanted the Board to try and bring more voices into their meetings.

Ms. Hays had given a speech to Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) reflecting her work with the Board. She had enjoyed the EEA listening sessions and hoped they continued doing similar events that Board members could be involved in. Ms. Hays stated that if they opened schools, they had to make sure they were doing it safely.

Chair Walston thanked the students for their reports and welcomed them back. She wanted to thank the community for the commitment to learning. The Library Levy was passed during the election and Bethel District got their bond approved.

XII. Suggestions by the Board for Consideration of Items at a Future Meeting

November 2020: Wednesday, November 18

December 2020: Wednesday, December 2 & Wednesday, December 16

January 2021: Wednesday, January 12, 2021

February 2021: Wednesday, February 3 & Wednesday, February 17

April 2021: Wednesday, April 21

May 2021: Wednesday, May 5 & Wednesday, May 19

June 2021: Wednesday, June 2 & Wednesday, June 16

Mr. Lafer noted that hiring a new Superintendent was one of their four goals for the year. He wondered if they should pick a different goal. Chair Walston replied that they had a Leadership meeting on November 9, 2020 and they could talk more about it then.

XIII. Adjourn

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Lydia Dysart)

Cydney Vandercar

District Clerk

Mary Walston

Board Chair