

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

August 19, 2020

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 5:30 p.m. and a regular session at 7 p.m. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on August 14, 2020, and published in *The Register-Guard* on August 19, 2020.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF:

Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent of Schools
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

MEDIA: KRVM

BOARD WORK SESSION: Board Development

Chair Walston called the Work Session to order at 5:00 p.m. She introduced Margot Helphand, Owner of Helphand and Associates, a Eugene-area management consulting firm.

At the Board retreat the role of the Board came up during the Board self-assessment and the work on the goals for this year. Board leadership was tasked with coming back to the Board with a plan for a further conversation. Margot Helphand will facilitate that conversation. Margot

is a recognized expert on school board governance policy and has worked with School District 4J many times in the past.

Ms. Helphand asked what the Board had done toward their goal of hiring a permanent Superintendent.

Chair Walston said later in the evening, during the Regular Session, the Board would be discussing recruitment firms, and selecting a finalist(s) for that position that the Board would eventually interview.

Vice Chair Newman said she believed the Board was on pace to hire a permanent Superintendent by spring of 2021.

Mr. Lafer foresaw problems with the superintendent hiring process due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said it was the Board's responsibility to answer the questions surrounding this process during a global health crisis.

Ms. Helphand brought up the District goal of formulating a plan for the north region up for discussion.

Ms. Levis offered that her understanding of this goal was the Board developing a plan for where schools in the north region would be placed permanently—specifically Yujin Gakuen and Kelly Middle School—making way for the new North Eugene High School location.

The Board agreed their role in the future of the north region should not only be to create the framework for the process itself and how it would move forward, but to listen and take into consideration input from the School District 4J community.

Ms. Hays said she believed the Board should have voted on whether or not to have portable learning spaces at the Kelly Middle School site, and Mr. Lafer agreed.

Mr. Lafer said he felt the two areas the Board should have the final vote on, were the locations of Kelly Middle School, and Yujin Gakuen. He offered those were the two most urgent things, and the Board should address them first.

Ms. Shabram pointed out that the line between policy decisions and operational decisions were often blurred.

Ms. Helphand asked the Board their thoughts on proceeding with a Kelly Middle School-Yujin Gakuen vote without having a complete picture of what would be happening in the north region.

Ms. Levis asserted the Board should be very clear with the community as to the District's visions and plans for the north region.

Mr. Torrey agreed with Ms. Levis. He stressed the importance of stakeholder involvement in the Board decision of the Kelly Middle School and Yujin Gakuen locations, and once those decisions were made, they could be expanded upon, and specifics of the north region could be explored.

Mr. Lafer reiterated his assertion that the Board should make the final decision of the new locations for Kelly Middle School and Yujin Gakuen.

Ms. Helphand asked the Board if there was consensus among them concerning their role in a vision for the north region which uses input from the internal and external communities, but is a broad vision of what the north region should look like. She asked the Board if they saw this as their role in the north region at this time.

The Board agreed unanimously that it was.

Ms. Helphand then asked if the Board was in agreement that they needed to vote on where Kelly Middle School and Yujin Gakuen would be located in the north region.

Ms. Levis said she was not sure she understood exactly what she would be voting on at this time.

Ms. Helphand asked the Board to discuss their goal surrounding navigating COVID-19, and supporting student achievement in a changing environment of comprehensive distance learning and on-site instruction.

Mr. Torrey said that in the last few weeks, there had been a lot of public pressure surrounding School District 4J decisions about distance, and in-person learning, and why the District was taking cues from the Governor and the State Legislature, instead of making internal decisions. He asserted no one knew more than the District Administration, who dealt with the State Legislature daily during the course of their business. Mr. Torrey believed the Board should be making sure the Administration had the resources and support they needed to continue expertly navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Levis said that it was possible the Board would have to meet and vote on policy deciding exactly how the District would conduct school. She said it was the most critical to get the kids back in school as soon as possible.

Chair Walston pointed out how important the Board's budgetary decision-making was, especially during the pandemic. She also stressed the importance of equity, and how the Board's budgetary decisions could help close equity gaps—now more than ever.

Mr. Lafer agreed this goal was of the utmost importance. He said it was important for the Board to find time at its meetings to further discuss these major decisions they must make; and equally important, he offered, was setting aside times to hear from Board leadership, staff, teachers, and parents.

Ms. Hays wondered what the District plans were concerning students dropping out of District schools at a higher rate due to the COVID-driven learning challenges.

Superintendent Vandercar said much of the District's decision-making was handed down by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), but there were things that the District did have full control over, e.g. technology hubs, and daycares in the schools.

Ms. Levis thanked Ms. Helphand for the discussion as it cleared up misunderstandings and difference of opinion. She said it was important for the Board to take the time to get on the same

page before making decisions, and, like Mr. Lafer, would like to find the time to do discuss the decisions that are to be made.

Chair Walston committed to having more work sessions to facilitate deeper conversations about the decisions—many of them very important and time-sensitive—the Board had to make.

Chair Walston adjourned the work session at 6:46 p.m.

I. REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Chair Walston called the regular meeting to order at 7 p.m., and led everyone participating in the meeting in the pledge of allegiance. She then acknowledged the land on which the meeting was taking place was the Traditional Homelands of the Kalapuya People, who have been stewards of the land for approximately 14,000 years.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

MOTION: Mr. Lafer moved, seconded by Ms. Shabram, to move the Comments and Committee Reports by Individual Board Members back to its position in the agenda right after Comments by Employee Groups.

Ms. Hays said that since Board leadership is responsible for setting agendas, they would have to change the Board working agreement to even entertain Mr. Lafer's motion. She said she would not support the motion.

Ms. Levis concurred, offering the Board Chair was chosen by the Board to set agendas; she was also not in favor of the motion.

Ms. Shabram offered the agenda change in question was substantive enough to warrant this motion and further Board discussion on the matter.

Chair Walston found it unfortunate that so much time was being spent on this motion at the beginning of the meeting. She said the time was better spent on agenda action items, and in fact, she had heard from the community that the Board takes too long to get to the action items on the agenda, and that was why she changed it, as is her prerogative.

Mr. Lafer offered the Board working agreement would not have to be changed to accommodate his motion; he said this instance was what the Agenda Review item on each agenda was for. He continued that he did not believe the Board Chair should have carte blanche where this was concerned. Mr. Lafer said it made sense to have the Comments and Committee Reports by Individual Board Members agenda item at the beginning of the meeting, because that was when the most community members would be tuning in, and it was important for the community to hear Board members' opinions on the agenda items, and their thoughts on items raised by the community in the Public Comments agenda item.

MOTION: Chair Walston called the question.

VOTE: The motion passed 5:2, with only Mr. Lafer and Ms. Shabram voting against. The debate on Mr. Lafer's original motion ended.

VOTE (Mr. Lafer's original motion):
Shabram voting in favor.

The motion failed 2:5, with only Mr. Lafer and Ms.

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Interim Superintendent Vandercar offered those participating in the meeting a Superintendent's report. She commended 4J staff for their tireless hard work and dedication to the District and the families they serve during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Vandercar said if 4J was allowed to have sports, that all teams would be operating within compressed seasons, beginning in December of 2020.

IV. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Walston asserted a three-minute-of-speaking rule would be in effect from this point forward during 4J meetings, in an attempt to make the meetings more efficient. She added that she would like the Regular Sessions to begin at 7 p.m., so there was space available before the Regular Sessions for Work Sessions. Chair Walston also said the agenda item dealing with religious holidays was moved to the October 7 agenda.

V. ITEMS RAISED BY THE COMMUNITY

The Board acknowledged that they had read all written and submitted comments from the community, and they thanked them for their communications.

VI. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Peter Tromba, representing Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS), recognized outgoing MAPS President Eric Anderson for his years of service to the organization. He stressed that a focus on strengths, while planning for the upcoming school year, where equity was concerned, would serve the District better than focusing solely on problems that need to be solved.

VII. CONSENT GROUP

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to approve the Consent Group.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

VIII. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Receive Information on District Plan for Return to Learning

Interim Superintendent Vandercar et al. offered the Board an informational report on the District's plan for reopening schools.

Ms. Levis asked when general information about the 2020-21 school year would be available.

Ms. Delf replied that much of the aforementioned information had been released already, and there was an FAQ page on School District 4J's website that addressed some of that information. She said as more information became solid and available, it would be disseminated in that same fashion.

Mr. Lafer said he would like to see more survey information on childcare in the upcoming school year.

Mr. Torrey said he would like to see a school-by-school list of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, so the Board will know what is happening across the entire District as far as CTE was concerned. He also asked if there was a program or course in existence in School District 4J which would identify students' specific interests and abilities in different CTE classifications.

Mr. Dey said staff could get the Board a list like the one Mr. Torrey mentioned. He also said there were a number of ways to identify CTE students' specific interests, abilities, and aptitudes for CTE.

Vice Chair Newman wondered about the District's suicide prevention training, and climate change in curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Lange said the District was currently at work on social-emotional learning plans for students and staff, to be implemented during suicide prevention training.

Ms. Shabram asked if attendance would be taken for synchronous instruction, and if so, would there be consequences for students and/or families for absences and tardiness. She also wondered if the District was concerned about delaying construction timelines at Silver Lea Elementary due to previous cost escalations.

Mr. Johnson replied that students would not be penalized for not participating in any of the synchronous learning opportunities, of which there would be many offered every day, and students could use those opportunities to keep up their attendance. He added attendance could also be managed by logging on to District learning software, and/or email communications with their teachers.

On the Silver Lea project, Mr. Spain said the demolition component of that project had been delayed so the grass field behind the building might still be utilized. He said there would be no impact on the project budget from the delay.

Chair Walston asked if it was correct that there would be no in-person education for kids in grades K-3.

Superintendent Vandercar said that was correct, there would be no in-person education for kids in grades K-3.

Chair Walston asked if a family could switch from hybrid learning to online-only learning.

Ms. Delf replied said they were asking families to convey their educational choice for the school year. She added it would be extremely challenging for the District if there were a large number of students who wished to switch learning styles during the school year.

Mr. Lafer asked if it was possible to receive a copy of the language that is being proposed as far as what types of guarantees teachers have to make to teach in the upcoming school year.

2. Receive Information on Student Safety Review Process Framework

Ms. Delf offered the Board a report on the framework of the Student Safety Review process.

Ms. Shabram asked how the extension of School District 4J's contract with the Eugene Police Department (EPD) through the end of this calendar year fits into the student safety review process.

Ms. Delf said an updated contract with EPD would be available to the Board in a future Board meeting.

Mr. Torrey asked if the 4J Equity Committee would be responsible for outreach concerning safety in the District's schools. He also hoped there would not be a Work Session until the Board has received Committee input.

Mr. Lafer asked who would be performing the work previously done by sworn officers of the law (EPD) in District schools.

Ms. Delf said that question would be answered with further discussion and decision-making on the part of the School District 4J Board.

3. Review Board Committee Assignments

Chair Walston offered the Board a report reviewing Board Committee assignments.

IX. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Consider for Adoption Revisions to Board Policy LBE - Public Charter Schools

Ms. Nesbit offered the Board a report on the proposed revisions to Board Policy LBE – Public Charter Schools.

Chair Walston wondered, given the volatility of the District’s enrollments, if the District would not be better served moving to monthly enrollment.

Interim Superintendent Vandercar said that staff could rewrite the possible revision to Board Policy LBE, switching the enrollment to monthly, and then present it again at the next Board meeting.

X. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Shabram said she was glad to see the first sketch of the framework for student and school safety, and she said she looked forward to being a part of that conversation.

Vice Chair Newman offered a heartfelt thanks to the School District 4J staff and faculty, and also the students, families, and the community for their work and dedication to the District in this trying time.

Mr. Lafer took a moment to recognize District educators, who—faced with the COVID-19 pandemic—have gone above and beyond their duties and responsibilities to local kids, by developing engaging, effective online course material.

Ms. Levis announced she had recently attended a webinar put on by the California Latino School Boards Association, titled: Dismantling Systemic Racism in Public Education.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

(Recorded by Rodney Cimburke)

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Mary Walston
Board Chair