

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

September 2, 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 7:00 p.m. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on August 28, 2020, and published in *The Register-Guard* on September 2, 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
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

I. BOARD WORK SESSION: Discuss the Impact of the Second Special Session of the Oregon Legislature on District Funding and Budgets

Chair Walston called the Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

Superintendent Vandercar and Ms. Belz addressed the Board concerning the impact of the second special session of the Oregon Legislature on District funding and budgets.

School District 4J Budget Committee member Jennifer Winters asked if there were any more employee groups the Budget Committee still had to meet with.

Superintendent Vandercar said the Budget Committee still needed to meet with Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS).

Ms. Winters asked if MAPS had a history of going along with others' contracts.

Superintendent Vandercar said yes, MAPS typically follows along with the licensed employee group(s).

School District 4J Budget Committee member Joshua Burstein asked if the District was in a position to keep operations/employees as they are, were they in a thinner mode, where they would have to find money for planned operations/employees, or were they in a hiring mode.

Superintendent Vandercar stated the District had not been able to carry out most of the planned activities for which Student Investment Account (SIA) monies were earmarked, so those monies had not been spent. She added the District had spent a lot of money on remote /online learning, but that expenditure was offset from State and Federal dollars granted to the District for that purpose.

School District 4J Budget Committee member Juan Carlos Valle asked what the funding sources or programs were to ensure High School graduation for students of color. He asked if there was an available funding forecast for the next two years. Mr. Valle asked if there was a record being kept of all COVID-19-related monies the District had received. He asked if the supplemental budget due in November would support underserved students, and if so, how? Finally, Mr. Valle asked if there were any plans for the District to hire bilingual/bicultural teachers or therapists.

Superintendent Vandercar said that, regardless of budget considerations, School District 4J was always trying to hire bilingual/bicultural teachers and therapists.

Ms. Belz said that since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, the District has been tracking all COVID-related expenditures into a single function within the accounting system, and to date, the District has spent \$382,603.53, mostly on equipment and cleaning/sanitizing supplies. She added that any additional funding the District receives will be accounted for very closely.

School District 4J Budget Committee member Merri Steele wondered about the number of students who planned to return to in-person learning this schoolyear, as opposed to those utilizing distance learning exclusively.

Superintendent Vandercar reported that approximately 900 students had signed up for Eugene Online Academy (EOA), and that 72% of those who responded to a survey on the matter said they would stay with online learning, and move to a hybrid online and in-person learning when that is made available to them.

Ms. Hays asked if there were any steps being taken this schoolyear to help with the unknowns surrounding next schoolyear.

Superintendent Vandercar assured Ms. Hays et al. That she and staff were focusing on this very issue, so the district is not caught unawares next schoolyear.

Ms. Levis asked if all District students would have access to Wireless Internet service.

Superintendent Vandercar said many district students had been given WIFI hotspots, but they were running into issues with those students and their families who lived on the outskirts of the district; she said it was possible those students would not be able to get enough of a WIFI signal at their res-

idences, but School District 4J was opening up school buildings to approximately 250 students per day.

Mr. Lafer asked how much District teachers would be losing from the PERS legislation. He asked how substantial the number of kids withdrawing from the District was. Mr. Lafer asked about the Cultural Navigator positions that were originally a part of the SIA funding.

Superintendent Vandercar said, so far, the District did not know what exactly the State was expecting from them concerning the Cultural Navigator positions. She said there was no solid answer from the District just yet on question concerning withdrawals from School District 4J.

To answer Mr. Lafer's question about PERS, Ms. Belz said it would be different for each teacher, depending on several factors, including a teacher's classification.

Vice Chair Newman asked if there were remaining funds in those received from the Federal Government for COVID-related expenses, or was the \$365,000 spent so far out of the District's General Fund.

Ms. Belz explained the two different money sources, and the limits thereof. She said the \$2.8 million from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund, had spending limitations, and the District had spent most of it on student devices, connectivity, and instructional software. Ms. Belz said the Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) grant of approximately \$258,000 would be used mostly on access and connectivity.

Mr. Torrey thanked the staff for the presentation. He asked if the document "Student Needs Index" that was provided on one of their meetings in July can be made available to members of the Budget Committee because it contains important information regarding the needs of students at different schools. He asked how we are making sure that we are looking for funds that might not be consistent across the District that could be made available to schools such as River Road/El Camino del Rio. He stated he hopes that we are looking for ways to balance the needs for the neediest schools across the District.

Superintendent Vandercar stated they had just allocated \$150 thousand dollars to help support kids that don't have materials to do their homework at home such as pencils, glue, crayons, scissors. She stated they reached out to the community and had a great response. She stated they will make sure that the schools get what they need.

Dr. McGaughy stated that systematically they do use the "Needs Index" for adjusting the needs of schools but where they adjust staffing allocations they use a weighted formula for schools that take in consideration certain variables such as; free and reduced lunches, Disabilities, ELL, students experiencing homelessness, and students with high mobility rate. She stated they do receive federal funds for schools based on their student population and that determines the amount of funds they receive and from what fund to provide extra support.

Vice Chair Newman asked for clarification on the different grants and how they were spent.

Ms Belz explained the different funds and how they were spent and stated they would be working on the budget that will be brought later to the Board for review as part of the supplemental budget.

Vice Chair Newman wondered if the \$4.25 million the District would receive in SIA funds was already spent.

Superintendent Vandercar said the District had not yet spent all of those monies.

Ms. Shabram asked for more information on how we are reaching out to the unhoused students.

Superintendent Vandercar along with Mr. Menachemson stated they worked with Excess Media to reach out to specific families, and also used their relationship to reach out to some of the shelters in town to provide connectivity to the families housed in those shelters in the area.

Ms. Levis relayed a question sent to her via text message from School District 4J Budget Committee member Robert “Bob” Chandler; Mr. Chandler asked if the District was back to full employment, and if not, what was preventing a return to work for those employees or groups of employees.

Superintendent Vandercar said there were some employees who were working (and being quite productive) from home, and there were others who had to be on site to work, but the District was not paying any one of its employees who were not working at all.

Ms. Winters asked if the District knew the number of students who were having trouble with WiFi connectivity.

Mr. Menachemson said that number currently was approximately 150 families. He also stated the partnership with Excess Media was free.

Ms. Steele asked if there was any partnership with anyone to ensure children have a place to go when they are not in school.

Superintendent Vandercar stated they have been working with the community group to try to put together childcare. Dr. McGhaughy stated they have been meeting weekly with the County, childcare organizations, the city and childcare providers to try to come up with a solution to childcare for the community.

School District 4J Budget Committee member Juan Carlos Valle asked what was the response from Spanish speaking families in regards to their needs.

Mr. Menachemson stated they did robocalls, emails, both in English and Spanish and every communication sent out was in both languages as well.

School District 4J Budget Committee member Maya Rabasa asked if there were funds earmarked for COVID-19 testing for staff and students.

Ms. Nesbit said although that question had come up frequently in conversation, the District has not had a chance to really discuss it yet.

Chair Walston adjourned the Work Session at 6:51 p.m.

II. REGULAR BOARD MEETING

III. CALL TO ORDER. ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Walston called the regular Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and called the roll. She 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.

IV. AGENDA REVIEW

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

V. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Cydney Vandercar said the district has done a lot of research and work in an effort to ensure all 4J students have internet access with online learning starting Sept. 14, and that the district is working to partner with local community providers and provide space in schools for childcare. She noted that this year's Back-to-School Staff Gathering would be held virtually the following morning, on Thursday, September 3.

Board chair Mary Walston said the board held its annual goal-setting retreat on Friday, August 28, and identified its top priorities for the year, including navigating the district through the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, selecting a superintendent for the next school year, and completing a district-wide student safety review.

She reiterated that the district will no longer have school resource officers stationed in 4J high schools after Dec. 31; the district's contract with the Eugene Police Department expired in June and the board authorized its extension through December. She said several emails from residents she read suggested there's some public confusion about the board's decision on school resource officers.

She briefly outlined some of the items on the meeting agenda and said the board planned to video livestream its virtual meetings via Zoom, starting with the next regular meeting in September, to increase the board's engagement with the community.

VI. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Walston said it was a possibility the conversation slated in the agenda surrounding District response to COVID-19 (within the staff report on the District's plan to return to learning [item X., 1.]) would run longer than the allotted 30 minutes. She also reported the Board held a virtual retreat on Friday, August 31, 2020, at which they formulated and discussed four District goals for next year:

- Navigating the District's COVID-19 pandemic response
- Recruitment of a permanent Superintendent
- The adoption of a District-wide safety review and safety plan, and
- More detailed plans for the North region of School District 4J

Finally, she asserted the District had no plans to have School Resource Officers (SRO) based in the High Schools.

VII. 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.

VIII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Tom Horn, representing Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS), offered the Board an update on initiatives MAPS was currently working on, including an internal survey of MAPS members, focused on members' key interests and concerns.

Sabrina Gordon, President of the Eugene Education Association (EEA), offered the Board an organizational update. She lauded the creativity and care being invested into the upcoming schoolyear by 4J staff.

IX. CONSENT GROUP

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Lafer, to approve the Consent Group

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

X. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Receive Information on District Plan for Return to Learning

Superintendent Vandercar and staff presented two completed documents that will guide the district's operations when public health conditions allow students to return to school buildings: the Operational Blueprint for School Reentry and the COVID-19 Communicable Disease Management Plan. They outlined for the board various health and safety measures and how the district would respond when a student or staff member has a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19. District staff answered questions from the board about the plans to educate 4J's youngest students, those with the highest learning needs, and those without internet access.

Superintendent Vandercar reported that family members of more than 13,700 students had responded to an online survey to select one of three learning options available this year. More than 72% chose the Same School Hybrid option, 20.5% selected Same School Online and 7.5% elected to learn through the Eugene Online Academy.

Responding to community inquiries, Ms. Vandercar said a longtime 4J engineer was inspecting the ventilation systems at each of 4J's schools and would deliver a report soon on any needed upgrades. She said the district planned to change filters more often and bring into buildings outside air for longer periods than normal as a precautionary step.

Superintendent Vandercar also reported the district has negotiated agreements with the district's employee groups to allow eligible employees to temporarily work from home, for part or most of their work time, in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. She said the district had so far approved agreements with 472 employees, with more requests coming in.

Ms. Shabram wondered if it would be possible in the near future to bring in small groups of District students needing extra support from educators.

Ms. Nesbit said she was not positive, but she did know that small work groups are already convening to have the discussion about a limited return to learning.

Dr. McGaughy stated they have already engaged with some SpEd students to do evaluations. She stated they are working on a plan to bring in additional groups of students with the guidance from ODE.

Ms. Newman asked how opening limited spaces in District schools for kids who do not otherwise have Internet access would impact the in-person limitations the District is currently under.

Superintendent Vandercar said that any student coming into a school to use the Internet would be counted toward the district's weekly in-person learning.

Mr. Torrey asked how students from K-1 will be integrated into classroom activity, literacy and basic math.

Ms. Wagner stated they have had Kinder and first grade teachers working throughout the summer on how to engage with these students.

Mr. Lafer asked about grading and standardized testing for the upcoming schoolyear.

Superintendent Vandercar said the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) had defined what School District 4J would be doing—much as they did in the spring of 2020—including grading and attendance.

Mr. Anderson stated they had 4J teachers creating 4J guidance for learning targets and assessments.

Ms. Levis asked if there were any plans or goals in place to get all District students hooked up to the Internet, outside of bringing them into schools in small groups.

Superintendent Vandercar said staff was doing massive amounts of outreach to families of students without Internet connectivity, to determine possible solutions.

Ms. Hays asked what specifically the District has planned as far as childcare goes and the number of people allowed in the buildings.

Superintendent Vandercar said that childcare was separate, and District staff in the schools did not count toward daily building occupancy limits.

Ms. Hays wondered how the District was planning to assess who the childcare providers in a school building would be.

Ms. Wagner said School District 4J staff had recently sent out a Request for Qualifications that were due back on September 8, 2020.

Mr. Lafer wondered why the District could not play more of a coordinating role in providing spaces and Internet access for the most vulnerable of School District 4J's students, e.g. students from low-income families.

Dr. McGaughy offered that, in a recent survey the District sent out which had over 13,700 respondents, 1,188 of those responses indicated families who would be interested in shared child supervision with other families, and 1,174 respondents indicated they were interested in a local fee-based childcare.

Ms. Newman offered that any School District 4J families needing financial support should consider applying to the State of Oregon's Employment-Related Day Care (ERDC) program.

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Adopt 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.

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Lafer, to adopt the revisions to Board Policy LBE as presented.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

XII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Consider the Request from the City of Eugene for Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption

Ms. Belz introduced Ellen Meyi-Galloway, from the City of Eugene's Planning and Development Department.

Ms. Meyi-Galloway offered the Board a report on School District 4J's support of the City of Eugene's Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption (LIRHPTE).

The City of Eugene is requesting that the Eugene School District 4J Board adopt Resolution 2020-04 supporting the State of Oregon's and the City of Eugene's policy that allows the City to grant 20-year property tax exemptions to low income rental housing providers in Eugene (the LIRHPTE program). Pursuant to ORS 307.519(2), the 4J Board's written concurrence with the LIRHPTE program is necessary in order for the County Assessor to exempt eligible low-income rental housing providers from all property taxes.

In order to facilitate the development of affordable housing for low income Eugene residents, the Eugene City Council added Sections 2.937 – 2.940 to the Eugene Code, adopting the State's Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption policy (ORS 307.515 to 307.523). The City's LIRHPTE program provides the process and approval criteria for granting 20-year property tax exemptions to eligible owners of low-income rental housing properties.

The 4J Board of Directors has previously expressed support for the LIRHPTE program. In 2009 the Chair of the 4J Board of Directors wrote a letter to the Oregon State Legislature in support of extending the enabling legislation for the program, and a resolution was passed by the Board on March 14, 2018, continuing support for this program.

When LIRHPTE tax exemptions are granted, the City and other local taxing districts forgo revenue. Pursuant to ORS 307.519(2), the tax exemption is limited to the City's tax rate, and does not exempt applicants from other property tax rates (e.g. schools, county) unless the 4J School District adopts a resolution supporting Eugene's LIRHPTE program. If the 4J Board adopts resolution 2020-04, eligible low-income housing providers will continue to be exempt from all property taxes. Without the full tax exemption, it is far less likely that developers will undertake development of low-income rental housing in Eugene.

The Oregon Legislature recently extended the deadline for filing low-income rental housing property tax exemption applications until July 1, 2030. On May 26, 2020, the Eugene City Council adopted an ordinance extending Eugene's LIRHPTE program in accordance with state law. Therefore, based on ORS 307.519(2), the City of Eugene is requesting that the 4J Board adopt resolution 2020-04 in support of the extension of Eugene's LIRHPTE program to allow low-income property tax exemption applications to be filed until July 1, 2030. In the past, the State Legislature has typically extended application deadlines for periods of ten years. The previous deadline was January 1, 2020.

Vice Chair Newman asked if those people/entities already tax-exempt through this program's previous iterations would be able to extend their tax-exempt status out ten more years.

Ms. Meyi-Galloway answered the LIRHPTE was a 20-year exemption, and those approved would not have to apply again for 20 years.

Mr. Lafer asked what percentage of a rental properties total units would have to qualify as low-income for that property to gain tax-exempt status through LIRHPTE. He asked what the definition of “low-income” was as far as LIRHPTE was concerned. Lastly, Mr. Lafer asked what the total value of the exemption was.

Ms. Meyi-Galloway said the definition of “low-income” in the case of LIRHPTE, was 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). She added the actual value of the tax exemption was very difficult to quantify, due to the varying rental costs and AMIs across the region.

Ms. Levis & Ms. Hays thanked Ms. Meyi-Galloway for the presentation.

2. Consider for Approval OSBA Annual Membership

Ms. Delf offered the Board a brief report on renewing School District 4J’s membership with the Oregon School Boards Association. She offered the annual membership fee is based on the number of students in the district and will be \$10,823. Ms. Delf also pointed out that OSBA has not increased membership rates for several years.

3. Consider for Adoption Proposed Board Policy JHH - Student Suicide Prevention

Ms. Nesbit offered the Board a report on proposed Board policy JHH – Student Suicide Prevention.

Senate Bill (SB) 52, also known as Adi’s Act and passed by the 2019 Legislature, directs districts to adopt a policy requiring a comprehensive plan on student suicide prevention for students in Kindergarten through grade 12.

The law prescribes subjects that must be included in the suicide prevention plan, and the policy proposed mirrors those requirements. It is recommended that the board adopt Board Policy JHH – Student Suicide Prevention as required by Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 339.343.

XII. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Shabram asserted the conversation her and her peers on the Board surrounding the School Safety Plan were very robust and productive, and, she added, those conversations would not be possible without community input, and the Board members upholding their duty to read all email correspondences from the School District 4J community.

Vice Chair Newman expressed it is difficult to answer when people ask how she is doing, since we are in a constant state of change. She stated they are working very hard to ensure all students have all the tools needed to get their education. She expressed her gratitude towards everyone working hard for all of our students.

Mr. Torrey posited the Board and the facility staff get together to figure out a way to have a virtual meeting about all the new developments in the District, e.g. the new North Eugene High School softball field, in the interest of transparency to the Eugene taxpayers.

Mr. Lafer offered that he was happy to hear the District would not be employing standardized testing this school year, but rather would be utilizing teacher-based assessments, and he urged his colleagues to work with the State to get rid of grades during pandemic learning.

Ms. Levis took the opportunity to appreciate and celebrate the recent Board distance retreat, but she was disappointed the Board did not discuss its working agreements at said retreat, and she hoped a discussion on that topic would be placed on a future meeting agenda.

Ms. Hays stated she has spent her time working at Lane County and she wanted to share her amazement with their professionalism. She shared that she attended the 57th anniversary March on Washington.

Chair Walston stated she agrees with Mr. Torrey in regards to having a virtual meeting on the new Willard site.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

(Recorded by Rodney Cimburke)

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Mary Walston
Board Chair