

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

August 5, 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 July 31, 2020, and published in *The Register-Guard* on August 5, 2020.

NOTICE: In light of current public health concerns related to coronavirus COVID-19, the regular meeting of the Eugene School District Board of Directors on August 5, 2020 took place 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 PRESENT:

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

STAFF:

Cydney Vandercar, Interim 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

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 agenda item dealing with reopening schools from an Item for Information, to an Item for Action.

VOTE: The motion failed 2:5, with only Mr. Lafer and Ms. Shabram voting in favor.

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Interim Superintendent Vandercar offered those participating in the meeting a Superintendent's report. She thanked 4J for allowing her the opportunity to work with the District in this position.

IV. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Walston offered comments about the upcoming 2020-21 school year, and what a challenge it is going to be. She urged those participating to be mature and vigilant, as they all got through the pandemic, and all the challenges it presents, together.

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

Sabrina Gordon, President of the Eugene Education Association (EEA), offered the Board a brief report on EEA's recent activities. She thanked the District for the updates released recently on the back to school plan, and said the EEA and those it represents greatly appreciated these updates, as it gives them time to plan.

Sheila Waggoner, President of the Oregon Service Employees Association (OSEA) offered the Board a brief report on OSEA's recent activities. She thanked the District for their hard work and continued dedication to overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Waggoner also thanked the District for updating everyone on its plans to return to learning

VII. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Levis thanked Chair Walston for taking over the role of Board Chair. She also thanked the staff and Superintendent Vandercar.

Ms. Shabram said she was looking forward to seeing the changes with which 4J overcomes the challenges presented by the pandemic during the 2020-21 school year.

Mr. Lafer congratulated Ms. Vandercar on making the decision and announcement that the first trimester of the 2020-21 school year will be distance learning. He lamented that, during the pandemic, many people are being called on to decide between making money or remaining healthy, and he was glad Superintendent Vandercar had not only announced the first trimester would be exclusively online, but also that teachers would have the option to teach from inside school buildings, but it was not a requirement they do so.

Ms. Newman offered those participating a summary of the recent Legislative Committee report. This summary is attached to the School District 4J August 5, 2020 Agenda.

The Board gave its consent to the Legislative Committee to move forward with the proposals in the report.

VIII. CONSENT GROUP

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Torrey, to approve the Consent Group without the first item - Approve DreamBox Supplemental Online Math Curriculum Expansion to Include Middle School Students.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

Mr. Lafer said the Board packet materials on the DreamBox software states there was a Harvard study done on the software which quoted a 60% improvement in students' math scores after using DreamBox. He asserted that was false information, as the Harvard study in question does not mention that statistic at all. He also stated that DreamBox was not the correct tool to use at this time, while School District 4J was dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. McGaughy offered the Board some information on the DreamBox software. She pointed out that, since DreamBox was not considered core curriculum, it was not a Board decision whether to incorporate it or not.

MOTION: Mr. Lafer moved, seconded by Ms. Shabram, to defer any decision on this item from the Consent Group until the next School District 4J meeting on August 19, 2020.

VOTE: The motion failed 2:5, with only Mr. Lafer and Ms. Shabram voting in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Levis moved, seconded by Mr. Torrey, to approve the DreamBox item from the Consent Group.

VOTE: The motion passed 5:2, with only Mr. Lafer and Ms. Shabram voting against.

IX. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Receive Information on District Plan for Return to Learning

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

Ms. Delf provided an overview of the Districts return to learning framework.

Mr. Johnson shared the plans on the middle school academic planning on distant learning.

Mr. Torrey appreciated the clarity with which the return to learning information was disseminated, not only to the Board, but to the public as well. He wondered how the kids would be placed in to respective cohorts— if they would they be split up by reading level, for example.

Ms. Wagner replied staff was exploring many options to that end. She added that there were created two teams to work with the young kids on English Language Arts, Reading, and Writing, and these were separated into kindergarten - first grade, and second - third grade.

Ms. Levis asked for more information on the dual-language and immersion school students; she wondered how they would be catered to during the pandemic.

Ms. McGaughy said currently immersion school families had the choice of going to comprehensive distance learning, with the possibility of going to a hybrid of distance, and in-person learning. She added that secondary students (grades 6-12) would be able to continue with a world language online, but they would not be able to have their other classes in the immersion language.

Mr. Lafer asked if School District 4J employees who were vulnerable to COVID-19 be forced to put their health and the health of their families at risk by working inside a District building, or would they be at risk of losing their jobs, and by extension, their healthcare benefits, should they refuse to do the former. He also wondered why no accommodations were being made (as they had been made to a smaller degree in the past) for students with parents who must work and have no childcare, for those students to gather in small groups in the empty classrooms.

Interim Superintendent Vandercar answered the District was working with EEA to make sure that teachers retain the option to work from home if they so choose. To the point of employees at risk of losing their jobs with the District, Interim Superintendent Vandercar said it was an unknown at this point, but the District was working actively on solutions to that issue as well, such as WIFI-equipped buses to deliver food to kids, while acting as an Internet hub for the students' distance learning. She assured the Board that the District was exploring every avenue possible to keep School District 4J employees employed.

Ms. Shabram expressed her hope and support for the District making sure employees—licensed and classified—can work in spaces in which they feel safe. She asked to what degree if at all had the District reached out to middle- and high-school kids about what extra-curricular supports they might need. Ms. Shabram also wondered exactly how many hours of instruction were involved in the District's distance learning models.

Interim Superintendent Vandercar said the instruction hours would be vastly different in the fall than they were in the spring, and District staff would get that information to Ms. Shabram and the rest of the Board as soon as possible. She said that instructional time was dependent on suggestion from the Oregon Department of Education, but early indicators pointed toward two-and-a-half to three hours of instructional time.

On the topic of extra-curricular supports, Dr. Dey said they were pursuing Community Beyond Courses, and that the Affinity Group leaders from all the high schools in the District were planning ways in which students can still build community remotely.

Ms. Newman expressed approval for the Community Beyond Course program, but wondered what was doing to build outside-the-classroom community for elementary and middle school kids.

Mr. Johnson offered that middle school students were also connecting via their own Affinity Groups, like high school students, and middle school Affinity Group leaders—like high school students—were playing an active role in that decision-making.

On elementary students, Ms. Wagner said the plans for elementary-age community-building were very similar to middle and high school students, with many members of District staff stepping in to facilitate such connection.

Ms. Hays asked if the plan for return to learning was set, and thusly, unchangeable.

Interim Superintendent Vandercar said it was not.

Ms. Hays used that opportunity to show how, if the Board had voted on this plan tonight as Mr. Lafer had moved to do earlier in the meeting, they could be stuck with parts that ended up being undesirable, and unchangeable. She stressed the importance of the Board taking its time digesting and considering this vast amount of information on such an important topic.

Chair Walston wondered how the District could help kindergarten and elementary students develop peer communities outside of school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Wagner said there was a group of dedicated educators working on this question. She added one of the solutions was Class Community Meetings, but the District would have to be mindful of the fact all students might not be able to log in to the Internet at the times of those meetings.

Mr. Torrey asked if District staff had been working on prioritizing the spending of Student Success Act (SSA) dollars during the pandemic.

Interim Superintendent Vandercar said School District 4J would get roughly a third of the amount they originally thought they would receive from the SSA, and those monies were earmarked for social and emotional supports for students.

Mr. Lafer asked if middle and high school students are scheduled for six classes a day in two-and-a-half hours, rendering each class 25 minutes long. He also wondered if it would be possible for schools to announce they were looking for parents who would be willing to connect somehow outside of school, thereby connecting their kids as well.

Interim Superintendent Vandercar said it would be possible for schools to reach out to parents concerning community-building, and that she would direct staff to do so.

On Mr. Lafer's second question, Mr. Johnson said the District had a team of teachers and middle school principals and assistant principals working on the class time issue. He added they were looking at least 30-minute classes, but they were also looking at double-block options, to give teachers more time to teach remotely.

Dr. Dey clarified there would be five periods of distance learning at the high school level, not six.

Ms. Newman then asked that the district think about the possibility of considering tutoring, she stated the NAACP has provided a Saturday tutoring in the past and thinks this may be beneficial specifically to the McKinney Vento kids or K-3. She asked if it would be doable to provide tutoring even in an outside setting in a safe manner for students who may be struggling and may want to be in groups of 2-3.

Mr. Dey stated there is a work group that is focusing on community partnerships & how they can engage with community groups that families usually reach out to before they come to the school and utilize the trust families place on them and provide support to students and families. He expressed that we have to think about partnerships in a different way than how it has been historically.

Ms. McGaughy reiterated what Mr. Dey stated and explained what they are looking at ways to partner with community groups so they can expand support services and make opportunities available.

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Approve Revisions to Academic Calendar

Ms. Nesbit offered the Board a report on the proposed revisions to the School District 4J Academic Calendar.

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Shabram, to approve the revisions to the Academic Calendar as presented by staff.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

2. Approve Informal Request for Proposal (IRFP) - Superintendent Search Firm

Ms. Nesbit offered the Board a report on the IRFP – Superintendent search firm.

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to approve the IRFP – Superintendent search firm.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 11:02 p.m.

(Recorded by Rodney Cimburke)

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Mary Walston
Board Chair