

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

October 14, 2020

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a Work Session at 5:30 p.m. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on October 9, 2020, and published in *The Register-Guard* on October 14, 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 PRESENT:

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

STAFF:

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

OTHER: Margot Helphand

MEDIA: KRVM

I. BOARD WORK SESSION: Board Development Work – Development of Student Safety Plan

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

Chair Walston introduced Margot Helphand, Owner of Helphand and Associates, a Eugene-area management consulting firm, who offered the Board a discussion and Power Point presentation on the development of a Student Safety Plan (SSP).

The Board annually sets goals for the year. The Board initially identified four goal areas in the Board retreat on August 28, and identified in the Board self-assessment and discussion a need for further consideration of the role of the Board in the work on these goals for this year.

Margot Helphand is a recognized expert on school board governance policy and has worked with the 4J Board many times in the past. Ms. Helphand facilitated the Board's conversation about goals and roles in a work session on September 16. Three of the Board's four goal areas were discussed in the time allotted. A second work session has been scheduled on October 14 to continue discussion and address the fourth goal, completing the planned District-wide safety plan.

On June 24, the Board approved a resolution affirming the Board's dedication to identifying and correcting practices and policies that perpetuate opportunity and achievement gaps and institutional racism, and committing to conducting a thorough review of the District's current model of providing for safety in schools.

This will require time and attention to undertake to understand our District's current systems and supports, identify values and chart a direction for key improvements for our District's students.

The process outlined for the student safety review this year provides a framework for a critical review of the District's current systems for student conduct and school safety.

Key questions include:

- What systems and supports do we have in place?
- Do our students, families and staff feel safe and supported at school?
- Do our current systems and supports lead to equitable outcomes for our students?
- What changes to our systems are needed to reduce disparities?

Information review: The student safety review process begins with a dive into information about the District's current systems, practices and outcomes. The Board this fall will schedule a series of items for information, work sessions with the 4J Equity Committee, and Work Sessions of the Board, to review and discuss key information.

Key Information includes:

- Review of relevant Board policies
- Student discipline system
- Student behavior expectations and supports
- Available counseling and mental health supports
- Role of the public safety director, campus monitors, school resource officers, and others
- Data on school climate, student discipline, and student arrests
- Key research on school discipline and safety models
- Information on alternate safety models and alternatives to exclusionary discipline, and to arrest and adjudication for conduct that could have criminal consequences

Community voice: This fall, the District would engage community input to hear the voices of students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and community members who experience or are impacted by the current systems we have in place. This could include a combination of board listening sessions held as public forums, small group dialogue with feedback shared to the Board, and potentially guided community conversations held jointly with other local organizations.

Key communities to engage include:

- Students and communities of color
- Students and community members experiencing disabilities
- 4J parents and students
- Teachers, specialists and classified staff
- School administrators

On the Key Information list above, Mr. Lafer and Ms. Shabram both said the list looked good from their perspective, but they would not feel comfortable signing off on it totally, without community input first.

Ms. Shabram offered she would add what kinds of training the District is already offering to its staff surrounding equity issues to the list of Key Information. She also said she would like to see how equity is included in the curriculum the District teaches added to the list.

Chair Walston and Ms. Levis agreed that it was crucial to work closely with the School District 4J Equity Committee on any SSP.

Ms. Hays pointed out that terms such as safety mean different things to different people; she offered that what feels safe to her, might not feel safe to someone else. She warned against polarization, and stressed the importance of an all-inclusive conversation with the School District 4J community.

Ms. Shabram said the community voice piece would work best if it resembled a working group, made up of representatives from students, staff, community stakeholders, etc. who would be able to participate in dialogue and problem-solving.

Mr. Lafer agreed with Ms. Shabram, and said he thought input from students, staff, and community stakeholders etc. along the way, would be crucial to the development and implementation of the SSP.

While Chair Walston agreed as to the importance of input from different outside parties, she reminded the Board that what they were working on was *their* goal, and this Work Session's purpose was to figure out the Board's role in the creation and implementation of a SSP.

Mr. Lafer said he believed the Board would benefit from certain check-in points during this process, as a way to make sure action was being taken, and things were actually getting done on the way to creating a SSP.

Ms. Helphand pointed to a draft timeline for the SSP, with the Superintendent developing an SSP framework by spring of 2021, a Board review in the late spring of 2021, and implementation by fall of the same year.

Ms. Levis pointed out that a seven-month process with meetings every week was simply not going to work for everyone in the community who would otherwise like to be heard through the Community Voice piece of the SSP.

Ms. Hays said it would be a good idea to kick off the work on the SSP with a joint meeting between the School District 4J Board, and the School District 4J Equity Committee with a focus on community voice inclusivity.

Ms. Helphand asked if all Board members were comfortable with moving forward with the development of the SSP.

The Board said they were.

Ms. Helphand ask if all Board members were comfortable beginning the process with a joint meeting of the Board and the Equity Committee.

The Board said they were.

Mr. Torrey said the Equity Committee should receive a report of this Work Session, as a way to brief them on the matter before the joint meeting.

On the draft roadmap to School District 4J's SSP, Chair Walston stressed the importance of checking in regularly. She also said the SSP work should be started immediately.

Mr. Lafer said this was a huge undertaking, and the Board could be working on it for years; he said that was okay, but felt there needed to be concrete accomplishments each year.

Ms. Shabram referred to the development and implementation of the SSP “the work of a lifetime”, and as such should have built in regular and frequent check ins.

Ms. Helphand said it was important for the Board to agree on a plan framework officially; she said if they issued an official decision, staff’s role in these first steps would be made much clearer.

Ms. Hays stressed the importance—in this, and all District matters—of keeping the decisions the Board makes separate from the decisions made by the Superintendent.

Moving forward, Ms. Helphand encouraged the Board to be explicit about the difference in Board roles, and the roles of staff.

II. Adjournment

Chair Walston adjourned the work session at 6:54p.m.

III. Executive Session

The board convened in executive session to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed, pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (h).

Executive sessions are closed to the public.

(Recorded by Rodney Cimburke)



Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk



Mary Walston
Board Chair