

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

October 21, 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 16, 2020, and published in The Register-Guard on October 21, 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
Jeffry 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 Radio

OTHER: Jess Tuerk Roshak, Carol Babcock, Gary Campbell, Jessica Saydack, Joshua Burstein, Tatiana Bakhtina, Trent Spradling, Janet Schmidt, Stephen Parac, Morgan Munro, Ericka Thessen, Eli Ruth-Cheff, Anna Weinman Gonzales, Anne Fifeld, Tanya Pitts.

I. Work Session: Interview Budget Committee Applicants

Chair Walston opened the work session at 5:01 p.m. Ms. Delf went through the process for the interviews and said that the Board would vote on November 4, 2020.

Jess Tuerk Roshak: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Ms. Roshak was an educator and learned the importance of a budget through teaching.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Roshak thought schools should create safety nets for their most vulnerable students as well as student health, stability, and safety. She mentioned that it was important to listen to the community.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Roshak was a teacher, numbers person, critical thinker, good listener, asked a lot of questions, is open minded, and has no personal agenda.

Carol Babcock: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Ms. Babcock had been a school board member at Sweet Home and had been on their budget committee. She was also a school district accountant and had audited schools in Eugene.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Babcock said she had no agenda and was familiar with 4J's goals and agreed with them.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Babcock was familiar with the processes of a budget committee and thought that joining the Committee would be a good way to give back to the community and be involved.

Gary Campbell: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Mr. Campbell was a teacher and ran a non-profit that helped students where he had to work with a budget from scratch. He was also a member of the 4J Equity Committee.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Mr. Campbell had no agenda and wanted to emphasize equity when possible.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Mr. Campbell wanted the District to do their best and help students and the community.

Jessica Saydack: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Ms. Saydack is a mother of two and an attorney in the private and public sectors.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Saydack wanted to make sure that everyone had a voice and was a part of the process.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Saydack thought she would bring a new voice and new perspectives.

Joshua Burstein: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Mr. Burstein has been on the Budget Committee for six years and wanted to be reappointed.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Mr. Burstein wanted to balance the budget, be realistic about what they could get done, focus on equity and getting all students college or career ready.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Mr. Burstein has been a renter and a homeowner and used to be a lawyer. He felt that he knew a lot about the community and could represent them.

Tatiana Bakhtina: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Ms. Bakhtina was a budget analyst at Lane Community College and made sure that their budget aligned with their goals.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Bakhtina's children had gone through 4J schools and she knew the challenges the District faced.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Bakhtina understood a lot about budgets and would involve the community.

Trent Spradling: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Mr. Spradling was the budget director at the University of Oregon and had been a financial manager at a university in Colorado. He also was an executive director for a four-million-dollar operation.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Mr. Spradling wanted to help the youth, ensure that the budget lined up with the needs of the District, create a wide resource acquisition, and create a new set of needs concerning COVID-19.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Mr. Spradling had experience making hard budget decisions and would ask the difficult questions.

Janet Schmidt: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Ms. Schmidt has an accounting degree and budget experience at the university and non-profit levels.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Schmidt wanted to further the education opportunities for the less fortunate students but had no specific agenda.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Schmidt said that she was detailed oriented and a good listener.

Stephen Parac: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee.* Mr. Parac ran a technology

company in Eugene that had a ten-million-dollar budget, he has an economic degree, an accounting background, and has been involved in 4J and Eugene for a while.

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Mr. Parac noted that it was not his job to set policy or set those types of goals. He would listen to the community and County and State guidelines. There would be no personal opinions.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Mr. Parac had budgetary knowledge and had a passion for public education.

Morgan Munro: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee. Ms. Munro was a business owner, consultant, non-profit board member, and has worked with a lot of budgets.*

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Munro wanted to help the District achieve goals that the staff had outlined.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Munro had helped businesses reach and create goals as a team and wanted to do that for the District.

The Board took a break from 6:07pm – 6:13pm.

Anne Fifeld: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee. Ms. Fifeld worked for the City of Eugene as an Economic Strategies Manager.*

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Fifield had no certain agenda and just wanted the budget to be balanced.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Fifield wanted to help the District flourish and be supportive of all students.

Ericka Thessen: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee. Ms. Thessen served on the Whole Earth Nature school board and the Lane County Parks Budget Task Force.*

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Thessen wanted to be fiscally responsible and include equity and equality with students as their guiding light.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Thessen works well in groups and would bring interesting perspectives.

Eli Ruth-Cheff: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee. Mr. Ruth-Cheff was bilingual researcher at the Center for Equity Promotion in the College of Education at the University of Oregon.*

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Mr. Ruth-Cheff wanted to promote equity in systems that had historically failed minorities. He also wanted to do what he could to make sure that staffing reflected the community.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Mr. Ruth-Cheff went through the 4J District and wanted to give back.

Tanya Pitts: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee. Ms. Pitts had been on local budget committees.*

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Pitts wanted to move Board decisions forward and make them happen.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Pitts enjoyed working to fill gaps.

Anna Weinman Gonzales: *Ms. Newman asked for a brief description of their experience or training that they believed made them qualified to be on the Budget Committee. Ms. Gonzales worked in the non-profit industry and loved working with the community.*

Ms. Shabram asked what their interests or priorities were regarding public school budgets. Ms. Gonzales wanted to do her part and support equity and money being spent responsibly.

Mr. Lafer asked what they thought they could personally bring to the Budget Committee if appointed. Ms. Gonzales was invested in equity and the children. She spent a lot of time looking at numbers, would bring a unique view, and knew what the community needed.

Chair Walston stated that Mollie Billings-Goodson had withdrawn from the process. She said they would take a short break before starting the regular meeting.

II. Regular Board Meeting

Chair Walston opened the 4J Board meeting at 7:00 p.m.

III. Roll Call, Flag Salute, Land Acknowledgement

All Board members were present. Chair Walston read out the land acknowledgement.

IV. Agenda Review

There were no changes to the agenda. Chair Walston approved it as presented.

V. Introduction of Guests and Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Vandercar went to the Eugene Education Association (EEA) listening sessions and understood that they needed to continue to talk about changes being made in the District and keep staff and students updated. They would continue to make changes as needed. The Student Investment Account (SIA) was cut to \$4,300,000 for 4J. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) allowed for an adjustment to their original plan if nothing new was added. Superintendent Vandercar noted that the Board would also be voting on the State of Oregon grant agreement (No. 13635) later in the consent agenda.

Jim Green from Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) was there that night to announce the 2020 School Board Member of the Year: Alicia Hays. They appreciated her long-term goals and

focus on equity. Ms. Hays was surprised and thanked everyone for the honor. She pointed out that anything she may have done, was with the help of the rest of the Board.

VI. Comments by Board Chair

Chair Walston thanked all the applicants for the Budget Committee. She mentioned that they would be receiving an update on COVID-19 since cases were increasing in Lane County and would also be talking about policy JEF. The Board had a work session about student safety on October 14, 2020.

VII. Items Raised by the Community

All comments to the Board had been read by Board members before the meeting.

VIII. Comments by Employee Groups

Peter Tromba from 4J Managers, Administrators, Professionals and Supervisors (MAPS) said that they supported policy JEF and the tiered approach that was added. He stated that having administration involved in the scheduling would make the process more complicated.

Sabrina Gordon from EEA thanked the Board for their interest in the listening sessions. She hoped they understood the successes, issues, and the cries for help from staff. They needed to work together moving forward.

IX. Consent Group – Items for Action

- 1. Approve the State of Oregon Grant Agreement (Grant No. 13635) for the “Student Success Act – Student Investment Account”**
- 2. Approve Request for State Revenue from Lane Education Services District (ESD)**
- 3. Approve Personal Action**

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

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

X. Items for Information

- 1. Receive a Report on the Division 22 Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 2019-20 Assurances**

Superintendent Vandercar noted that every year the district presents a report on the Division 22 Standards to make sure they are in line with State law.

Ms. McGaughy said that there were only two major changes that needed to be made that year. They had to comply by November 1, 2020 instead of end of the year like normal. The state reduced their number of standards from 52 to 17 because of COVID-19 restrictions. She noted that 4J was following all but one of the standards. They already had plans to readjust.

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

Superintendent Vandercar wanted to start by talking about their accomplishments with returning to learning. The Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) collected more than \$100,000 in supplies for the community. The 4J nutrition services had given out 750,000 meals since March.

Superintendent Vandercar mentioned that 4J enrollment was starting to drop. They would be presenting a report on the issue at the November 4, 2020 meeting. Eric Anderson and Brooke Wagner would be presenting updates on the COVID-19 return to learning.

Mr. Anderson said that they wanted to help teachers work to increase student development through four pillars. They sent out their development calendar to get feedback and then made some changes.

Ms. Wagner said that they had three agencies doing childcare for 4J at their facilities. Eugene Creative Care was having a soft start on October 22, 2020 with 10 kids. YMCA was serving just over 75 4J students normally and were currently working out of Roosevelt Middle School with 16 students.

Ms. Wagner went over the Blue and Green times designated throughout the day. Staff understood that at-home learning was hard for families and sometimes they had to prioritize other responsibilities. If students could only show up live for a certain amount of time, they wanted it to count. Those times were called “Blue times”. This was time for teachers to work closely with students in the main subjects. Green times were recorded and made available online for any students to watch at another time.

Karen Hardin shared that all evaluations would be done along with the normal schedule. They were required by ODE to do an evaluation of administration yearly. They were focused on safety, self-reflection, and meaningful feedback.

Ms. Newman mentioned that at the EEA listening session she heard that Physical Education and Music were part of green time and were optional. Ms. Wagner said that students should be going to those classes if they were available, but they prioritized blue time if families had complications.

Mr. Torrey understood that there was immense pressure on teachers. He worried that lessons were too long with no breaks for students. Ms. Wagner informed him that they had “Noodle time” in their district where students could be off screen. It accounted for 30 – 40 minutes of the day and was done in five-minute increments. The teachers got to pick what the students did. Activities ranged from stretching to no camera time. She said that if teachers were not doing this then they needed to know so changes could be made. Mr. Anderson understood that there was some confusion when they started virtual learning, but they went over Blue/Green/Noodle times again so everything should be clear.

Mr. Lafer wondered if they could prioritize non-live instruction. He knew that teachers were having some burnout teaching all day and creating additional lessons for students who missed the class. Ms. Wagner stated that teachers should not be teaching a class twice. They needed to provide more information so that was clear to teachers.

Ms. Levis asked if there was a way to mix blue and green times throughout the day, so music and physical education were not always after lunch. Ms. Wagner replied that they were reevaluating the schedule in November and would be moving classes around. Mr. Anderson said that they set up the day that way because they wanted students to end on in a freeing fun way. They received feedback and are reevaluating.

3. Receive Update on District Plan for Student Safety Review

Chair Walston said that they had a Work Session the week before about Student Safety. It covered the larger system, not just student resource officers (SRO).

Ms. Delf would be giving a recap of what the Board talked about. The goal of the work session was to agree on a framework/scope and road map for developing the new 4J safety plan. This included creating goals, key components, and timelines, and understanding the Role of the Board and its accountability.

The Board wanted to provide safe learning environments; support meaningful, equitable, and highly effective instruction so that all students thrived socially, emotionally, and academically; and reduce the disparity of outcomes for students of color and students with disabilities. They understood this was a long-term commitment and something they would have to work at every year.

They created a draft road map to a new safety plan which included a system review, getting community voices involved, finding out the Board's direction, and creating an action plan.

The information they wanted from the systems review was: review of relevant board policies, student discipline system, student behavior expectations and supports, available counseling and mental health supports, existing safety staff roles, data on school climate, student discipline, and student arrest, key research on school discipline and safety models, and alternate safety models, alternatives to exclusionary discipline and adjudication.

The Board wanted to reach out and engage community input to hear the voices of students, families, staff, and community members who experienced or were impacted by the current systems in place. The communities they wanted to target included: students/communities of color, students/community members experiencing disabilities, 4J parents/students, teachers/specialists/classified staff, and school administrators.

The Board wanted to spend the Fall and Winter doing a system review and reaching out to the community. Then in February they would identify guiding values and areas to address and start directing development of the safety plan framework. They want to have the plan framework available by the Spring and reviewed by the community by the beginning of Summer. They wanted the plan to be voted on at the end of Summer and implemented by Fall 2021.

The Board talked about its job, individually and as a group, for the process and how they would hold themselves and the District accountable.

Ms. Hays said that they needed to stay flexible with this issue because they could not understand everything that happened. They needed to give the community time to heal before moving forward.

Ms. Levis thought it was important to have the Equity Committee involved. She was unsure how they would measure the issue, but they had to stay transparent with the community through the whole process. They had to face that there was systematic racism in their district, and it had to be addressed.

Mr. Torrey noted that they all agreed they needed to move forward. They should make sure that staff was confident and can come to the Board and let them know what the Board could do to help.

Ms. Shabram said it was hard to find tangible measures for this issue. They had to keep in mind how what they looked at pushed systematic racism forward. No matter what they did they needed to have students involved or represented.

Superintendent Vandercar said that they had discipline, graduation, and attendance data to look at, all of which could be used. They would be meeting with the Board and Equity Committee soon to figure out next steps.

XI. Items for Action

1. Approve Revisions to Board Policies: JEF Release Time for Religious Instruction

Ms. Nesbit said that in February they got information on how the District did release times for religious holidays. In June they heard the first read of the policy and since then staff made some revisions.

Ms. Shabram appreciated everyone who worked on the policy. It took a long time because it was not an easy thing to do, but it needed to happen. Mr. Lafer and Ms. Newman agreed with her sentiments.

Chair Walston said she had heard some concern with exam review make-ups. Ms. Nesbit informed her that teachers had to try their best to recreate reviews, but they understood it might not be the same. Sometimes teachers did games for the class and that would be hard to do with just one student. Mr. Lafer said that the intent of the amendment added was not to have the review exactly replicated. It was up to the teacher to decide how to do it best.

Mr. Torrey pointed out that all policy could be amended and changed in the future if needed.

MOTION: Ms. Levis moved, seconded by Ms. Newman, to approve revisions to Board policy JEF – release time for religious instruction.

Mr. Lafer wanted to get the two amendments approved first.

MOTION: Mr. Lafer moved, seconded by Mr. Torrey, to approve the amendment to have students who missed try-outs because of religious instruction were able to do so at a separate time.

Ms. Hays did not want to outline everything because then if something not talked about came up it could be avoided. Mr. Torrey agreed that this could be an issue. Ms. Nesbit said that it was not necessary to add this amendment because they already stated that missed try-outs would be made-up at another time.

VOTE: The motion failed – 2-5. Mr. Torrey, Ms. Newman, Ms. Levis, Ms. Hays, and Ms. Walston voted against the motion.

MOTION: Mr. Lafer moved, seconded by Mr. Torrey, to approve the amendment to have any tests, assignments, or final exam reviews a student missed because of religious instruction or observances given at another time.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

Ms. Walston said that the Board would now vote on the motion that Ms. Levis put forward concerning policy JEF.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

2. Approve Board Working Agreements

Chair Walston said that they previewed the agreements at the last meeting and asked for feedback. There were some typos that were fixed, but nothing else.

MOTION: Ms. Levis moved, seconded by Ms. Hays, to approve the Board Working Agreements.

VOTE: The motion passed – 6:1. Mr. Lafer voted against the motion.

3. Select Superintendent Search Firm

Ms. Nesbit went through the process of interviewing superintendent search firms on September 23, 2020. She said that if the Board did not want to pick a firm at the time there were other options.

Ms. Newman said that it might not be the time to conduct a search. She thought Superintendent Vandercar and her staff were doing a great job. Ms. Levis agreed and said that they were in a different spot than they thought they would be. They needed to be fiscally responsible, focus on COVID-19 issues and inequities in the system.

MOTION: Mr. Torrey moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to call off the solicitation of a firm to help them choose a superintendent.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

XII. Items for Action at a Future Meeting

1. Consider Extension to Interim Superintendent Contract

Chair Walston said that since they cancelled their search for a firm, they needed to consider extending the interim contract. She wanted to see a proposed contract and any community input at their November 4, 2020 meeting.

XIII. Comments and Committee Reports by Individual Board Members

Mr. Torrey had participated in an OSBA webinar about the upcoming legislative session that could happen after the election. Oregon got some money from the federal government and they were told they could use the funds for ventilation in schools and they said they could. Mr. Torrey had also gotten a lot of questions about why Kid Sports programs could use 4J facilities but no one else could. There were liability issues concerning COVID-19 since no insurance company was covering COVID-19. He wanted the public to know that they heard their concerns but wanted to keep everyone safe.

Ms. Shabram mentioned that it was international pronouns day and that her pronouns were she/her. She thanked EEA for hosting the listening sessions. Ms. Shabram was glad to see that staff self-care time was being provided. They needed to make sure that they were active in caring for teachers and not just pushing the responsibilities onto others.

Ms. Levis had her first Equity Committee meeting and appreciated everyone who was on it. They talked about what they could do moving forward to address systematic racism. She thanked EEA for hosting the listening sessions and said that there would be an EEF meeting the next afternoon which she would attend.

Ms. Hays thanked everyone who wanted to be on the Budget Committee. She appreciated everyone who said that if they were not chosen for the Committee that they wanted to be put somewhere else where they could help.

Ms. Newman shared that her pronouns were she/her. She appreciated the money that EEF was able to raise for their community and thanked EEA for holding the listening sessions.

Mr. Lafer shared his pronouns were he/him. He congratulated Ms. Hays and thanked EEA.

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

Meeting Dates:

November 2020: Wednesday, November 4 & 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

Chair Walston wanted to have a conversation or written document about what was covered at the EEA listening sessions so that all Board members could benefit from those conversations. She noted that all applicants for the Budget Committee were very qualified and wished they had more time to talk. They might want to speak more about how to change the process moving forward. Ms. Shabram and Ms. Newman thought it would be good to look at again. Ms. Newman stated that it was a clunky process, and they could talk about a new process at their retreat in January.

XV. Adjourn

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 9:52 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Lydia Dysart)

Cydney Vandercar

District Clerk

Mary Walston

Board Chair