

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

February 3, 2021

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 February 3, 2021, and published in The Register-Guard on January 29, 2021.

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
Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff
Brooke Wagner, Director of Pre-K-8 Education
Andy Dey, Director of Secondary Education
Christine Nesbit, In-House Counsel
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer
Karen Hardin, Director of Human Resources
Joyce Smith-Johnson, Student Services Administrator
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary

STUDENT ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS:

Harmony Simmons, Churchill High School
Dusty Temple, ECCO- Absent
Joel Sadofsky, IHS
Paige Dunnavant, North Eugene High School
Mazie McNamara, Sheldon High School
Noa Ablow Measelle, South Eugene High School

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Sabrina Gordon, EEA
Peter Tromba, MAPS

Tom Horn, MAPS

MEDIA: KRVM

I. Executive Session (non-public)

1. The Board convened in executive session to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions, pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(e)
2. Executive Sessions are closed to the public. All matters discussed during executive session are confidential and shall not be disclosed by any representative of the new media without authorization by the school Board.

II. Call Regular Board Meeting to Order

Chair Walston called the 4J Board of Directors meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

III. Roll Call, Flag Salute, Land Acknowledgment

Chair Walston called out roll, led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance, and read out the land acknowledgement.

IV. Agenda Review

Chair Walston asked to add an item for action to the agenda arising from the Executive Session.

V. Introduction of Guests and Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Vandercar said that since their last meeting Black History Month had begun, and a new President of the United States had been sworn in.

Superintendent Vandercar mentioned that the Governor made changes to the COVID-19 vaccination groups so that educators were included in the 1a group. As a result, the week prior around one-fifth of 4J's staff got vaccinated. She noted that employees that spent more time working with the community and educating younger students were prioritized. After that group got their second dose of the vaccine, they would wait two weeks and start the hybrid model. This would mean going back to in-person teaching right before Spring Break. Superintendent Vandercar said there would be more information on their COVID-19 plan later in the meeting.

VI. Comments by Board Chair

Chair Walston hoped that there would be a motion of some kind from the Board during their COVID-19 update. She thanked the community and staff for coordinating the vaccines.

VII. Receive Reports from High School Student Representatives

Joel Sadofsky, IHS, said that they started doing zoom social gatherings. At the first one the students played games together. He emphasized that the academic climate was incredibly stressful at that time, but teachers had been very understanding. Mr. Sadofsky mentioned that AP and standardized tests had not changed their standards to reflect the barriers with virtual learning. He ended his statement by reading a quote from Angela Davis.

Mazie McNamara, Sheldon High School, shared that they changed their food drive format to all online. Their website showed what they needed and assigned people times for drop-offs. She said that they were working hard on their school culture. There was a group created to figure out what students were missing and they recently sent out a survey. Ms. McNamara announced that one of their teachers, Scott Wright, had been released from the hospital.

Noa Ablow Measelle, South Eugene High School, shared that they started their Acts of Kindness project. That day teachers shared a link for students to write nice letters. She said that they were sharing volunteer opportunities with those who needed it for graduation. South Eugene would have their first virtual theater show that week. Ms. Measelle said that after midterms many teachers reached out to see how students were feeling. Students widely said that they felt burnt out. Seniors were hopeful to have an in-person graduation, even if it was in an untraditional way.

Paige Dunnavant, North Eugene High School, agreed with what Ms. Measelle said about graduation and added that many at North Eugene felt the same. She shared that they had planned trivia nights for every Tuesday of February. They would continue to plan a student event every week while they were learning virtually.

Harmony Simmons, Churchill High School, shared that they just finished up midterms. She said they would be holding a gift card giveaway for Valentine's Day. They were trying to increase student activity and were doing more on their social media accounts.

VIII. Items Raised by the Audience – Public Comment

Darin Henry, a teacher at Sheldon High School for the last 26 years, was inspired by students when they campaigned for the Climate Change resolution. He said that one goal related to that resolution was to have a climate literate society. Mr. Henry said they needed to keep the learning going in every subject and at all levels.

Brandy Wormdahl, a teacher at North Eugene High School for over 20 years, mentioned that it was National Girls and Women in Sports Day. For the past week and a half, she had worked with 30 girl soccer players, all masked and distanced. Ms. Wormdahl said that being outside and exercising seemed to help students manage their stress. Freshman said that it helped them feel like they were really in high school.

Maya Rabasa said that she was there that night with Imelda Cortez on behalf of the Latinx Alliance. They would be reading a letter that would be sent to the Governor. The Latinx Alliance was concerned with a few of the metrics for COVID-19 and return to in-person learning. Ms. Rabasa shared that the Latin community only made up 13% of Oregon's population, but 27% of the State's COVID-19 cases. She emphasized that they should not be ignoring metrics. Many people were saying that virtual learning would benefit everyone, but the District really needed to think about if opening would really help. There were key elements to help the Latinx community that had been left out.

Imelda Cortez, continuing the statement on behalf of the Latinx Alliance, noted that the District talked about prioritizing equity, but they needed to show it. If they added some elements to their guidance, then they would see Latinx students do better in school. They wanted to see a requirement that increased outreach through multiple mediums, have better quality of translations, and release translated materials at the same time as English versions. Ms. Cortez emphasized that Google Translate was not an acceptable tool to use. She mentioned that since students were at home they were helping out more with the house. Teachers needed to understand that this impeded with school and allow for flexibility. If the District went back to in-person learning, then they had to be ready to give counseling to students who would inevitably bring a deadly disease into their home. Ms. Cortez stated that they should be a better example than the Governor and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

Roscoe Caron said that at the Board's April retreat he hoped they would commit to decreasing the number of standardized tests. He mentioned that there were other ways to determine the level of student achievement which were less time consuming and anxiety inducing. ODE, Oregon School Board Association (OSBA), and others did not put time or money into these other options, but that did not mean they were not useful. Mr. Caron emphasized that these other methods would help in erasing the achievement gap.

Larry Lewin thanked the Board and 4J staff for all the work they had done. He said that the Eugene Education Association (EEA) sponsored Winter Term Staff Development seminars. Mr. Lewin attended one on making distanced learning better. A lot of the seminar was teachers sharing what had worked for them and what had not. Mr. Lewin asked teachers what they needed to succeed and what they thought of the hybrid model. Many teachers were concerned about who would be sanitizing everything, since they would not have enough time to do that and prepare for their next class. Also, since not everyone would be in-person, teachers did not know how they would juggle having in-person and virtual classes.

IX. Comments by Employee Groups

Sabrina Gordon, President of EEA, reminded the Board of the letter they sent out which was signed by over 700 EEA members. The letter outlined the safety measures that teachers felt were important for students and staff if they went back to in-person learning. She emphasized that the only safety measure they could rely on was the vaccine. That meant allowing time to give it to all employees and allow time for it to become effective. Ms. Gordon encouraged the Board to take a clear stance on vaccinating everyone before they returned to in-person learning. Teachers wanted to be back in school, but only if it was done safely. She said that they needed to work on improving online learning since there would still be students learning online once the hybrid model began.

Tom Horn, current President of Managers, Administrators, Professionals and Supervisors (MAPS), and Peter Tromba, incoming President of MAPS, thanked the health services staff, administrators, and the human resources department for an effective first round of vaccines. There was a sense of hope instilled in the community with the possible return to a "normal". Mr. Horn continued to be inspired by the strength of their community during the pandemic.

X. Consent Group – Items for Action

1. Approve Meeting Minutes: December 16, 2020

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

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

XI. Items for Information

1. Receive an Update on Lane ESD 2021-23 Local Service Plan Year One

Tony Scurto from Lane Education Service District (ESD) said that their partnership with 4J was important and they appreciated efforts made from staff on both sides. He said that their local service plan had some changes in it. There was a new service that provided nursing and communication services to medium and small sized districts. Legal services had also been increased so there could be faster response times. Mr. Scurto shared that the Board would vote on the year one local service plan at their next meeting.

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

Superintendent Vandercar said they would present on their vaccine rollout, plan for hybrid roll out, the elementary hybrid plan, athletics, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Ms. Hardin said that a lot had changed surrounding the vaccines since the meeting on January 13, 2021. She thanked Cascade Health, 4J nurses, their Office of Public Safety, their Human Resources, North Eugene Custodians, and Lane ESD. In total 760 vaccines were given to K-12 staff. Ms. Hardin said that 4J was also responsible for vaccinating some K-12 neighboring Districts and other service providers. All clinics going forward would include personnel from those partners. Ms. Hardin shared that Cascade Health was able to get two shots out of some vials so in total 860 people were vaccinated. The focus was on K-1 employees, food service, transportation, and custodial staff.

On February 1, 2021 they debriefed on their first round of vaccinations. Going forward they would plan for having extra doses. Ms. Hardin noted that they needed more observation rooms for people after they got their vaccination. Overall, everything went well, and they were excited for round two on February 9, 2021. That round would complete their vaccination of their elementary school employees.

Ms. Levis asked how long it would take for them to vaccinate all employees throughout the District with all three doses of the vaccine. Ms. Hardin replied that it was hard to pick an exact date for that. They were only being told how many vaccines they would get at the beginning of the week, which made it hard to plan out. With the Moderna vaccine there had to be 28 days between each dose. She said that Lane ESD gave them an estimate of five weeks to vaccinate elementary staff with their first dose.

Ms. Delf shared that draft roadmap for returning that staff had created. The proposed plan moving forward was to have established health and safety measures and have workgroups planning for teaching and learning in the hybrid model. Key staff supporting a grade level would have the opportunity for both vaccine doses and two weeks to develop immunity. She said that the vaccine was optional and not all staff had to be vaccinated. Ms. Delf said that they would continue to look at local COVID-19 case rates, so they were within the advisory metrics before opening for in-person learning again. The rollout might be paused if metrics were near the threshold and on the rise. The hybrid model would open by grade level, starting with the youngest students.

Looking at the Oregon metrics for returning to in-person learning 4J was in the orange phase where they could carefully phase in the hybrid model for elementary students only. There were a little over 200 people per 100,000 in Lane County with COVID-19. Ms. Delf said that families were given a choice to change their pathway before school started in August and again in November. Since so much had changed they were providing another opportunity to change their minds.

Ms. Delf shared a potential hybrid rollout timeline. They had already started vaccinating K-1 staff, which meant if they were on track, they would announce going to hybrid at the end of February. As a result, K-1 would enter the hybrid model in the middle of March. Grades 2-3 would start two weeks after, grade 4-5 two weeks after them, then Middle School two weeks after them, and lastly two weeks later High School would open for hybrid. At the earliest time High School would open for in-person at the end of April.

Ms. Newman mentioned that parents would be able to change pathways soon and wanted them to consider a more personal approach to the change. She thought they could have staff call them personally. Ms. Delf said that families were told that they would be able to change their pathway soon and were given information on what hybrid would look like. These updates were

given via email, text, and phone. Ms. Newman noted that those methods might work for some families, but others would need more of a discussion to understand. Superintendent Vandercar stated that wrap around services was working to help parents.

Ms. Shabram stated that they had to give families a clear idea on what hybrid would look like if they were going to choose a pathway. Ms. Delf told her that an educator workgroup was working on figuring out what a day-to-day hybrid would look like.

Mr. Torrey asked if the information can be sent to the news media. Ms. Delf stated they don't always send this type of information to the news media, but it is a great option to get the information out to families.

Ms. Levis emphasized that they had to be transparent about hybrid and make sure that any Spanish translation was not an afterthought. Many families were unsure of what the hybrid model was, and they had to clear up confusion before a pathway decision had to be made. Mr. Lafer said that they should be flexible on when families had to make their decision.

Mr. Sadosky sensed anxiety from families over having to make this decision. He said that the 4J website should have one section with all the information on hybrid in it.

Superintendent Vandercar said that tonight they will hear the elementary options because they would be the first to go back to in-person, which was very dependent on the number of vaccines they got.

Ms. Wagner noted that this plan was created by the Elementary Operations Workgroup, which was made up of 25 general education, special education, Title, and ELD teachers and counselors. This information was operational, and they would start working on what a day would look like for an elementary school student.

Elementary students would alternate between on-site and off-site weeks. When on-site they would have a two-tiered school start time like usual. There would only be a 5-hour school day, including lunch and recess, and students would spend four days on-site and one day remote. To prepare for on-site learning the District had made extensive health and safety measures. They bought masks, invested in hygiene and ventilation tools, created cohorts for students, and would be practicing social distancing. On off-site weeks, the school day would have the same time schedule as the on-site week. Also, there would be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. With the off-site learning there would be less live teacher time. Ms. Wagner knew that some families wanted to pick their pathway based off if their child's teacher was doing hybrid or virtual learning. However, they were not at a point where they knew which model teachers would be in. She asked for patience as they moved into that planning phase.

Ms. Shabram inquired into how teachers would be supported through the lesson planning process. Ms. Wagner replied that at any moment they had to be prepared to go back to distanced learning if case numbers increased. Right now, they had groups of teachers on special assignment creating lesson plans that teachers could use. They did not expect teachers to create multiple sets of lesson plans for each model. She said that they would be continuing to work on those details and teacher voice would be essential in those discussions.

Ms. Newman asked who would be with off-site students since their teacher would be teaching the on-site students. Ms. Wagner shared that this would be their focus when they met on February 5, 2021. Each school would have different needs based off the size of their staff and

number of students doing hybrid learning. The District would have different models to pick from. She said they would be working with childcare services to get them on a similar time schedule.

Mr. Lafer was concerned since they were potentially five weeks out from starting hybrid, but they did not know a lot of the fundamentals. He was confused on why students would be sent in to do the same work they would be doing in virtual learning. Mr. Lafer asked if they would make changes to virtual learning to help with those issues. Ms. Wagner responded that there were three groups of students (hybrid on-site, hybrid off-site, and virtual) that did not have finalized numbers. It would not be until after families picked their final pathway that the District could start planning exactly what school would look like for students. She believed if they were too far into a plan and families changed their pathway a lot of time would have been wasted. Mr. Lafer knew this was a tough choice since families wanted to see a detailed plan, but the District could not have a detailed plan until families chose a pathway. Ms. Wagner knew a lot of families wanted to know which way a teacher was going before making a choice. Superintendent Vandercar knew that none of these options were ideal, but they were trying to make it work.

Ms. Levis asked what the deadline for families to make their pathway decision was. She also wanted to know why the decision was made for a week-on week-off model. It made it difficult for parents to communicate their availability with their job. Ms. Wagner said that they hoped to have information on a deadline available to families the next day on February 4, 2021. They were looking at data to show them families that had not changed their pathway in August or November. They would reach out to them first to make sure that was an intended choice. Ms. Wagner said that the week-on week-off schedule was determined based off health and safety. If a student was infected, they would have time away from the school to recover. Some schools around the Country were doing half days, but there were a lot of sanitization issues. They were working with community childcare partners to try and help with any job complications.

Mr. Torrey said that administrators had been working on this plan since June 15, 2020. There were many complaints throughout the process, and he thought that the Workgroup did a great job of working through those issues. Mr. Torrey said they had to start the process of bringing students back because they could complain and ask questions forever.

Mr. Lafer asked if they could use the Willard swing school as a childcare facility. Also, he wanted to know if they could have a period in the middle of the school day for middle school and high school students to socialize. Mr. Lafer said this could help them mentally and give teachers a break. Superintendent Vandercar said that Edison Elementary teachers were working in the Willard school so it would already be inhabited. Superintendent Vandercar said that they could look into including a period for students to socialize.

Mr. Dey supported what Ms. Wormdahl said at the beginning of the meeting. He was happy to see students back at their sports and thanked all the coaches for their work. The Fall season would be starting soon. They would continue to provide updates for student athlete families.

Mr. Tucker said that the District was following guidelines from the Ready Schools, Safe Learners piece. They purchased adult and child face shields and masks, hand sanitizing stations and products, plastic barriers, handheld sanitizing sprayers so custodians could be more effective, and signs indicating to wear a mask and sanitize areas. They would start distributing equipment to schools once the hybrid numbers were finalized.

Ms. Shabram wanted to know more about shared bathrooms. Ms. Smith-Johnson replied that this was outlined in their communicable disease plan. Adults would clean up after themselves by spraying anything they touched. For Students bathrooms would be cleaned between cohorts.

Mr. Lafer wanted to hear more about hiring more custodians, if they would temperature check students, what lunch and passing periods would look like. He emphasized that this was the type of thing that families needed to know before moving forward on choosing a pathway. Superintendent Vandercar replied that they would give an update on what a day-to-day for a student would look like at the February 17, 2021 meeting.

Ms. Levis wanted to hear more at a future meeting about the struggles with comprehensive distanced learning and what work was being done to make it better. She wanted them to gather information from students.

Chair Walston thought that as a Board they should vote to show their support for the plan that staff had laid out for hybrid. Mr. Torrey mentioned that the Board was not an administrative body and they just dealt with policy.

MOTION: Mr. Torrey moved, seconded by Ms. Hays, for the 4J School Board to support the efforts of the Operations Workgroup to bring students back to their schools.

Mr. Torrey wanted the public to know that they expected administration staff to come up with the process for hybrid. Their motion did not mean that the model laid out was official, it just showed that the Board supported what staff was doing.

Mr. Sadofsky was hopeful, as a student, to see a plan being put together.

AMENDMENT: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Shabram, to add a friendly amendment to Mr. Torrey's motion to have the Board approve the Superintendent's recommendation to re-open schools for hybrid instruction on a rolling basis as determined by the Superintendent only after key 4J staff supporting the effected grade level had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated and two weeks to develop immunity.

Mr. Torrey supported the rollout method of having all staff for that grade vaccinated before opening for hybrid. Ms. Hays noted that they were not in charge of approving any recommendation made by the Superintendent. Ms. Shabram said that 'approving of' something just showed their support of an idea, not that they were enforcing a decision.

Ms. Newman and Ms. Shabram wanted their amendment changed to read that "the Board supported the Superintendent's recommendation to re-open schools for hybrid instruction on a rolling basis as determined by the Superintendent only after key 4J staff supporting the effect grade level had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated and two weeks to develop immunity.

VOTE: The amendment passed – 7:0.

VOTE: The motion passed as amended – 7:0.

Chair Walston said that they would move all other items on their agenda to their next meeting, since the COVID-19 update took so much time. Superintendent Vandercar said that there was nothing that had to get done that night, so they could postpone those agenda items. The Board apologized to staff and postponed the rest of the agenda until the February 17, 2021 meeting.

XII. Items for Action

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, for the Board to authorize facility staff and their consultants to negotiate an extension of the option agreement with the YMCA consistent with the discussion set out during the February 3, 2021 4J School Board Executive Session.

VOTE: The motion passed – 7:0.

XIII. Comments and Committee Reports by Individual Board Members

Ms. Shabram wanted to acknowledge the staff working on transitioning to in-person learning and the vaccination process. Ms. Shabram was excited to hear more specifics going forward. She wanted to acknowledge Black History Month and they had to make sure that their District was teaching about all cultures and histories. They were hurting students if they did not.

Mr. Torrey thanked the Board and District staff for all their work. He also thanked all the coaches for getting students out on the field.

Ms. Newman thanked everyone for working so hard and that the framework for hybrid gave her hope. She was trying to hear and speak on what that the community was saying. Ms. Newman stated that mental health issues had been going up and BIPOC had been more negatively affected. She said that they had to be clear on the transition to hybrid going forward.

Ms. Levis thanked all attendees for being at their meeting. She acknowledged Black History Month and said that the United States was a Country built on White Supremacy and on the backs of people of color. She wanted to focus on what Ms. Rabasa and Ms. Cortez read from the Latinx Alliance about how COVID-19 disproportionately affected the Latinx community. Ms. Levis stated that the District had to be clear about their plan for returning to in-person learning. Ms. Levis said that they were doing a lot of work on mental health and figuring out how they could implement supports.

Mr. Lafer had read comments from families and many wanted to be back in schools as soon as possible. He stated that whenever kindergarten through first grade went back to in-person then the Board should go back to in-person meetings as well. Mr. Lafer wanted the Board to start talking among themselves about standardized testing, the North Region Plan, and mental health.

Ms. Hays appreciated the time that staff took to listen to all the Board members. She enjoyed their mini-retreat and wanted them to think about including them more going forward.

Superintendent Vandercar said that it was National School Counseling week. She said that their counselors had been coming in for limited time to help their students and families. They did so much for the District and Superintendent Vandercar thanked them.

Chair Walston thanked the Board and staff present at their mini retreat. It was a great way for them to save some staff time. She agreed that they should take up the climate issue again.

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

February 2021: Wednesday, February 17

March 2021: Wednesday, March 3 & Wednesday, March 17

April 2021: Wednesday, April 21

May 2021: Wednesday, May 5 & Wednesday, March 17

June 2021: Wednesday, June 2 & Wednesday, June 16

Mr. Lafer wanted leadership to figure out when they could talk about the North Eugene Plan.

xv. Adjournment

Chair Walston adjourned the 4J Board meeting at 10:08 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Lydia Dysart)

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Mary Walston
Board Chair